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'Tourism uncertain but can increase in 2009' PAGE 2
CUC hires deputy director. PAGE 3

CPA implements new port fee

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority began charging passengers yesterday a new port fee of \$2.25 on a one-way ticket from Tinian.

Before, only the Saipan to Tinian trip was charged the port fee. This time, passengers are being charged \$2.25 at both ends of the journey. This means a total round trip fee of \$4.50.

Passengers bound for Saipan aboard one of the ferries of Tinian Shipping and Transporta-

no recourse but to pay.

Port Manager and CPA officer-in-charge Ignacio L. Perez personally supervised the start

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NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Passengers bound for Saipan line up to pay for the new port fee of \$2.25 at the Tinian port yesterday morning.

ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE MARIANAS 'Melting pot or salad bowl not an issue'

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER



Underwood

Economic activities, said Dr. Robert Underwood, brought all the different groups of people in the Marianas together, so talks of whether cultural diversity in the Marianas is a melting pot or salad bowl should not be an issue.

Underwood, a former member of Congress and professor emeritus at the University

of Guam, was the guest speaker at a forum on this topic on Dec. 11 at the American Memorial Park Auditorium, which was presented by the NMI Council for the Humanities and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Underwood said the melting pot or salad bowl metaphor does not capture the essence of the struggles of human

See MELTING on Page 4

DPS acquires 12 new police cars

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety has 12 new cars that are now ready to serve the community.

Fr. Jesse Reyes blessed the new patrol cars—all 2008 Chevrolet Trailblazers model—during a simple launching ceremony yesterday in front of the DPS office.

DPS Commissioner Santiago Tudela said two cars will each be assigned to Rota and Tinian while the rest will be for Saipan.

This project is supported by a federal grant to the CNMI Criminal Justice Planning Agency through the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program of the U.S. Department

Air Force to drop tons of gifts on Pacific isles

By TERI WEAVER
STARS AND STRIPES

U.S. Air Force members will drop more than 20 tons of toys, medicines, clothing, food and tools on islands throughout Micronesia this week as part of "Operation Christmas Drop," according to Air Force officials at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam.

The effort marks the 57th year that the military and Guam residents have donated goods to the isolated islands throughout

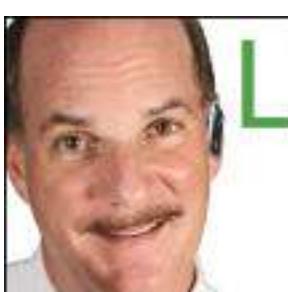
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NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Fr. Jesse Reyes blesses the 12 new police cars during a simple launching ceremony yesterday in front of the Department of Public Safety office.



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Local

'Tourism uncertain but can increase in 2009'

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Although 2009 is full of uncertainty for the local tourism industry, Marianas Visitors Authority board of directors chair Jerry Tan believes increased

airline seat capacity could help the CNMI.

During the MVA's biannual membership meeting last week, Tan presented his forecast for 2009; a task that he said was not easy.

"I start with a big question

mark because 2009 is really full of uncertainty," he said. "In order to do a good forecast you need a good basis. Unfortunately, there are too many unknown factors," he said, adding that the economy, inflation, federalization and the visa waiver

program are all factors beyond MVA's control.

Tan's forecast for 2009, based on actual arrivals and airline load factors, shows an increase of 56,000 tourists to 433,000 from 2008 estimated numbers. The increase in visitors will

come solely from Korea and Japan, according to Tan's presentation. This is assuming there is no loss in flights from the two countries. The prediction takes into account the loss of flights and visa waivers for China and Russia.

With increased flights to and from Korea and Japan, Tan



Koreans 40 percent more to travel to the CNMI and other locations in the United States.

Tan said the CNMI is lucky that Kumho Asian has invested in the CNMI. The company is building the \$60 million Laolao Bay Golf Resort and has increased flights

to and from Korea. Kumho also will begin flights from Osaka, Japan, this week.

"So we are very lucky that Kumho Asiana owns Laolao and Kumho Asiana owns Asiana [airlines]. So it's not

to their best interest to withdraw air service because they also need to protect their investment here. So we're very thankful and we need to continue to support them."

Admin has concerns about \$165.4M budget

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and his Cabinet had extensive discussions yesterday morning about the \$165.4-million budget for fiscal year 2009 that the Legislature recently passed.

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune* shortly after the Cabinet meeting, press secretary Charles Reyes Jr. said they actually have a few concerns about the proposed spending limit.

"We want to make sure that we'll address all those concerns," Reyes said without elaborating on the specific issues.

Reyes said the proposed budget is currently before Fitial's desk for review and that the governor has five days to look into it.

The press secretary said Fitial has already received feedback from Cabinet members and that he is going to take those issues into consideration.

"We expect that after a very

careful review we will have a decision that will be announced soon within the next few days," he said.

The Legislature passed a \$165.4-million budget for FY 2009, including provisions for 10.7-percent cuts against agencies funded by the central government.

The proposed budget excludes the self-funding Department of Public Lands, which will get \$3.1 million, and autonomous agencies.

Reyes said Fitial's next move—whether to veto or accept the proposed budget—will depend on whether the Cabinet's concerns can be addressed "in some other way."

"Most of the Cabinet meeting was pretty much focused on the budget issue," he added.

Reyes said Finance Secretary Eloy Inos pointed out that there are resource issues and that there is a need to revise the projected revenues due to the deteriorating revenue situation.

Students of the Golden Harvest International School pose with their teachers and principal after a bountiful harvest at the Primary Grade Forensic Competition held Dec. 6, 2008, at the San Antonio Elementary School.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Golden Harvest students reap PGFC medals

Students of the Golden Harvest International School once again had a bountiful harvest as they won in the different events at the Primary Grade Forensic Competition held Dec. 6, 2008, at the San Antonio Elementary School. Their hard work and determination paid off. Here is a complete list of the awards they won:

K-2 DIVISION

Dramatic Interpretation:

Holly Liban, 1st place
Daphne Cruzat, 2nd place
Alfie Madlambayan, 5th place

Humorous Interpretation:

Holly Liban, 1st place
Vince Phillip Salvador, 5th place

Duo A:

Jordan Towai & Ramhae Awit, 1st place
Hannah Lacap & John San Nicolas, 5th place

Duo B:

Daphne Cruzat & Faith Bocago, 2nd place

Choral Speaking A:

Ronald Fuellas, Angelo Talens, Danielle Pagsinohin, Allan Tzady Calangi & Fernand Ramos, 4th place

Choral Speaking B:

Andrei Reyes, Kennedy Vila, Dylan Inos, Davean Gonzales, 3rd place

Giselle Ivy Leong, Alyanna Mercado, Corin Mercado, En Ming Cadac, 5th place

3-5 DIVISION:

Choral Speaking B:

Tiffany Madlambayan, Isa Belle Seman, Cialena De Llamas, StephenSeth Alonzo, Geuel Christian Villacrusis, 1st place
Shekinah Grace Armea, Stevie Jocelyn Jeter, Shane Cobacha, Angelica Carla Diaz, Riselle Iris Leong, 2nd place

Choral Speaking A:

Elizabeth Inos, Newlyn Victoria Jeter, Emmanuel Cobacha, Francheska Fauni, 1st place

Humorous Interpretation:

Emmanuel Cobacha, 3rd place

Duo A:

Shekinah Grace Armea and Riselle Iris Leong, 1st place
Tiffany Madlambayan and Isa Belle Seman, 3rd place

Duo B:

Shane Cobacha and Stevie Jocelyn Jeter, 2nd place
StephenSeth Alonzo & Geuel Villacrusis, 4th place
Elizabeth Inos & Francheska Fauni, 5th place

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NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairman of the Board, is hereby giving notice that a Special Meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday, December 18, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

- I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
- II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
- III. MORTGAGE CREDIT PROGRAMS
 - a. BankPacific Work-Out
 - b. Direct Family Loan Request
- IV. CDBG
- V. FISCAL AFFAIRS
- VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
- VIII. OTHER MATTERS
- IX. ADJOURNMENT

(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/
MERCED M. TOMOKANE
Vice Chairwoman of the Board

Torres eyes visa waiver for foreign students

WINTER BALL

The University of Guam ROTC recently held their winter formal ball at the Holiday Resort in Guam. Picture shows former Northern Marianas College students enrolled in the ROTC program at the UOG. Kneeling from left to right are cadets Adrian Flores, Jason David, Jana Tudela and Martin Camacho. Standing from left are cadets Dennis Mendiola, Flora Aguon, Peter Camacho, Joseph Sablan and Kennedy Benjamin. The Reserve Officers Training Corp is a program designed to turn college students into commissioned officers in the U.S. military. The University of Guam offers this program to their students, as well as to the students of NMC. Of the 150 cadets currently enrolled in the program, there are 10 cadets from the CNMI at UOG taking the program. There are also 15 cadets taking this program at NMC. After obtaining their bachelor's degree the cadets will commission as 2nd lieutenants in the U.S. Army.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The chairman of the House Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare is looking into the concerns of many foreign students on Saipan who will likely be affected by the implementation of federalization in the CNMI in June 2009.

In an interview, Rep. Ralph DLG. Torres said yesterday that he is studying the possibility of proposing a visa waiver for students to address the issue of foreign students coming to the Commonwealth.

The lawmaker said the Legislature may request the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to consider the waiver for foreign students.



Torres

"That's one thing that we're looking at and in fact that was brought to my attention over the weekend—how the sponsorship applies," he said.

Torres said there is a possibility that foreign students who are currently studying at the Northern Marianas College, Public School Systems and other private schools may not continue their studies or may be released from schools after June 2009.

Torres said the issue was brought to his attention by some NMC officials during the college's Christmas party last Friday.

"The problem is entering Saipan's immigration, even if the [parents] can afford sponsorships," he said. "We're also looking into foreign investments. The students coming here are part of foreign investments. Currently, if you invest here, if you are a foreign investor, you can bring in your kids to go to school here."

Torres noted that most of these investors are Koreans who come with their children.

"I'm not certain as to what is the impact after June 1, if they are also considered," he added.

TO HELP WITH POWER PLANT RESTORATION CUC hires deputy director

By KRISTI EATON
kristi.eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has hired Wallon Young, a former employee of American Samoa Power Authority, to oversee the rehabilitation of Saipan's main power plant.

As deputy director for Utilities Systems Rehabilitation, Young will earn \$156,000 to \$180,000 per year. His contract is for two years.

"He's going to be a good acquisition," said CUC executive director Antonio Muña.

Muña said CUC intends to issue the contract and bring Young on board no later than the second week of January. Meanwhile, CUC has been collaborating with Young, especially regarding CUC's maintenance plan for Saipan's Power Plant 1.

"So by the time he gets here

we're going to hit the ground running," Muña added.

According to the job announcement, some of the duties required of the position include: assessing and evaluating the operating and non-operating plant; improving data collection; preparing an overhaul and maintenance schedule; training and leading staff on schedules; improving skill and knowledge sets of CUC staff; and

providing guidance and support in expediting the procurement of parts for power generation.

Young also will help with utility activities on Rota and Tinian as needed.

Off-island media have reported that CUC hired Young, as part of Quantum Pacific, in January 2007 to develop short-, medium- and long-term goals to the power problems. Top officials of Quantum Pacific are all former employees of the American Samoa Power Authority. The \$250,000 contract was initially for three months, according to reports that quoted company official Gerhard Sword.

Bridge Capital seeks extension to QC requirements Company eyeing purchase of Plumeria

By KRISTI EATON
kristi.eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Officials from Bridge Capital, LLC, are asking the Commonwealth Development Authority to extend until the end of 2009 the requirements the company must meet in order to receive tax breaks and incentives under the qualifying certificate program.

The deadline for Bridge Capital to meet the requirements in their QC application is currently February 2009.

Bridge Capital, a financial services company specializing in real estate acquisition, development, financing, and corporate lending, has been looking at properties and existing buildings on Saipan to house their headquarters. The company has been in negotiations with the owners of the former Plumeria Hotel, but environmental concerns are delaying a closing date.

"Aside from the usual and customary terms regarding title issues, price, closing dates, etc., the late-raised question of the environmental status of the Plumeria has caused some serious problems in obtaining an executed PSA [purchase and sale agreement] and setting a proposed closing date," Bridge Capital vice president and chief legal counsel Richard Pipes

wrote in a letter to CDA executive officer Oscar Camacho.

Pipes, along with other Bridge Capital officials, presented the letter at CDA's recent board of directors meeting.

"It seems unfortunate that when we would clear a hurdle on one problem related to the Plumeria, we would unfortunately come right into another one," Pipes told the board.

The Environmental Protection Agency and Division of Environmental Quality has issued several citations to Plumeria since 1999 on a storage tank that is located under the parking lot on the property. Until 2005 or 2006, Plumeria stored diesel in the tank for its generator before moving the fuel to storage barrels on site. But the discontinuation, according to Pipes, has left some issues.

"As I'm sure you're all aware [of], environmental liability when you acquire a property can just be enormous, if you are getting into a situation where someone has contaminated the soil," he said. "Even if you don't know about it, you can be liable for it because you acquired the property and didn't conduct the proper types of investigation."

Bridge Capital, which is temporarily located at the Marianas Heights Business

Plaza, is also pursuing other properties and existing buildings, the officials said.

Pipes said the company is about to make an offer on another project that would satisfy the company's capital contribution requirement portion of the QC. He did not want to name the property for fear it might affect negotiations, although officials did say that one property is a two-story building located in Garapan.

Pipes, in his letter to CDA's Camacho, said Bridge continues to be happy they moved their operations to the CNMI.

"We enjoy the islands, the people, the culture, the beauty and the living conditions found here. Both Bridge and its employees strive to contribute to the CNMI's quality of life by supporting the local economy and participating in local business and civic affairs. We look forward to many years of working with the CDA and doing what we can to make life a little better for the people of the CNMI," Pipes wrote.

The Investment Incentive Act of 2000 established the qualifying certificate program, authorizing the granting of rebates and/or abatements of up to one 100 percent for a period of up to 25 years to qualified investors.



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Rehabilitation Council
FY 09 1st General Membership Meeting
PO Box 501521 Saipan, MP 96950, TEL: (670) 322-6537 FAX: (670) 322-6536
TTY (670) 322-6449 EMAIL: voc.rehab@saipan.com



PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to I CMC 99910, the public is advised that the State Rehabilitation Council will hold its FY 09 1st General Membership Meeting on Friday, December 19, 2008 at the Azucena Room, Fiesta Resort Hotel at 10:00am-2:00pm. Interested individuals are welcome to attend.

AGENDA

- I. Preliminaries
 - A. Roll Call
 - B. Review & Adoption of Agenda
 - C. Review & Adoption of 6/25/2008 Minutes
- II. Reports
 - A. OVR Director
 - B. SRC Chairman
- III. Old Business
 - A. Vacancy Appointments Status
- IV. New Business
 - A. Election of Officers
 - B. Committee Chair Appointments
 - C. Approval of 2009 SRC Resource Plan
- V. Consumer Forum
- VI. Announcements/Miscellaneous
- VII. Adjournment

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend the meeting but require accommodations such as large print or sign language interpreters, are asked to call 322-6537(voice) or 322-6449(ITY). Please contact Magin Iginoef (Council Liaison) two days in advance for necessary arrangements.

/s/ Jesus Elameto
SRC Vice-Chairperson

Publication of this notice is paid for by federal funds made possible by the United States Department of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).

Japanese wins \$61K pot in TDHC Blackjack tilt

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Oyama Shigeo kept his cool even after winning the all-Japanese finals of the Blackjack Tournament Championship at the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino Sunday night, Dec. 14.

But with the \$61,000 prize he pocketed for besting six other compatriots who made it to the final table, Shigeo had the sweetest smile during the awarding ceremonies.

"Thank you," was the only thing he managed to say while accepting his giant paycheck.

Fujita Kiichi placed second and pocketed \$25,000 while Hiraide Isamu was third and settled for the \$15,000 purse.

The next four players who joined the

seven-man final table in the second day of the two-day tournament went home with \$1,000 each.

The list included Uchimura Yoshihide (4th), Tai Kaname (5th), Karakama Nobuo (6th), and Ichihara Yasuo (7th).

With an entry fee of \$1,000, a total of 105 players participated in this season ending tournament. The players were mostly from Japan.

Players were trimmed down to 49 in the semifinal stage, including four players who advanced via the wildcard entry.

There were a total of 15 from Korea but no one was able to make it to the final table.

Tournament director Tony Jackson said there were a total of seven tournaments in 2008, including five Baccarat and two Blackjacks.

Overall, Jackson said they had a very successful year at the Casino and they are hoping for a bigger and better tournament in 2009.

"It has been a fantastic year," Jackson said.

Casino Marketing & Promotions coordinator Kiri Jackson said the number of participants this time is slightly smaller compared to previous tournaments.

But she said it is always expected for a Blackjack tournament to have a smaller number of participants compared to Baccarat.

The following are the confirmed schedules for next year: For Baccarat, Jan. 17-18, March 14-15, July 11-12, Sept. 12-13 and Oct. 17-18 and for Blackjack, June 13-14 and Dec. 12-13.



NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Champion Oyama Shigeo holds his trophy and a glass of wine as tournament director Tony Jackson and casino staff Minao Tanji and Mayumi Chara join him on stage during the awarding of \$61,000 paycheck after winning the blackjack tournament Sunday night at the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

Fire Division wants to create ambulance privatization policy

The Department of Public Safety's Fire Division wants to be the agency that will create the policy relating to the privatization of ambulance services, instead of the Department of Public Health.

Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare chair Rep. Ralph DLG. Torres said yesterday that the original bill gives DPH the authority to draft the policy with respect to the ambulance services' privatization.

Torres said they are amending a provision of the bill to allow the DPS Fire Division to make the policy because its

emergency management technicians who will work with firefighters and the police officers.

"Ambulance falls under the Fire Division. When you call 911, it is the Fire Division that assists the patients and brings them to Public Health," he said. "Once the Fire Division brings a patient in an ambulance to Public Health, its service ends there."

"So that's why the EMS and the Fire Division are requesting that they create the policy relating to the privatization of ambulance services, not Public Health because Public Health

does not handle the Fire Division and the ambulance."

Torres said he met with Fire Division chief Juan Wabol and some of the staff, who are agreeable to the privatization of ambulance services.

"They said they like the privatization of ambulance services. It's just that they have to regulate the policy to make sure that it's same with their own ambulance regulations," the lawmaker said.

He said if DPH handles the privatization policy of ambulance services, it may differ from the Fire Division's regulations.

"Since Fire Department handles the ambulance section they would like to do the policy to synchronize it with the policy. It's okay with DPH," Torres said. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

Barcenas, member of the CJPA Supervisory Council representing Rota.

Barcenas expressed elation over the granting of the project by the federal government, saying the Municipality of Rota could not rely solely on local funds.

"We're very happy that we have this new car. We hope to transfer the two of them to Rota before Christmas so that we can use them and serve the community during the holidays," Barcenas said.

Community and Cultural Affairs Deputy Secretary Melvin O. Faisao, Director Dave O. Omar of the Chamorro Carolinian Language Policy Commission, and Gonzalo Santos of the Indigenous Affairs Office.

Underwood says there are women, men, Chamorros, Carolinians, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, fans of Desperate Housewives and L.A. Dodgers, all interspersing and creating different identities in our lives.

"Being a member of a group is very challenging in this context because conflicts of time, space and identity grab people's attention.

"Sometimes they are arguing about the same thing without knowing why they are arguing."

He said he was always fascinated throughout the years about the relationship between Carolinians and Chamorros because the Carolinians who are here predated the Chamorros here, but the Chamorros here think that they predated the Carolinians here, although physically none of them can trace their ancestry. Through the power of the imagination, though, the Marianas belongs to the Carolinians in general, he added.

DPS

From Page 1

ment of Justice.

It is also supported by the CNMI government and sub-granted by the CJPA Supervisory Council.

The grant was awarded to the CNMI government in 2006 but was delayed due to some changes in specifications.

The vehicles arrived two months ago

but the lights and other accessories had to be installed first.

The department previously had eight patrol cars, all of them model 2002 Ford Explorers.

"We're still be using the old cars but with these new ones, we will be serving the community better," Tudela said.

Also present during the launching ceremony were CJPA director Jerome Irome, CJPA Supervisory Council vice chair Ike Aquiningoc and Ricardo C.

English language, but even then it does not capture the essence of it," Underwood said.

Underwood believes that this is really a theory of cultural time and space.

"Everyone of us here has a sense of place. We occupy space somewhere and where we occupy space is in reference to everyone who occupies the same space, like through church, government, work, school or governmental system, we all have a sense of place."

He said place and space occupy a sense of time.

He said the Carolinians have a different sense of time and space than the Chamorros.

"Time and space offers issues of identity. You watch these young people talk about culture and identity as things that they own, but in the complexity of the 21st century world, there are dozens of cultural identity that we all carry around," he said.

Before the forum started, a video was shown to the audience, featuring reactions and views from the youth of different cultural backgrounds on Saipan.

Officials from three agencies of the government also served as guest commentaries, including Department of

MELTING

From Page 1

beings; rather, it trivializes it.

"It seems as if something as simple as a salad can explain the complexity of human experience. Human experience is very complex," he said.

He said human beings are the only living things that can remember a time before they were born and they can imagine the future long after they're dead.

He said it is the interplay of the sense of memory and sense of perspective and that constant dialoguing between the past, the present and the future makes people unique creatures.

In this context, he urges abandoning this salad bowl and melting pot analogy.

Underwood noted that a melting pot has been used to explain American society for a couple of hundred years and it has already fallen out of favor.

"It's like everybody gets together and gets kind of stirred up, and eventually something unique comes up that is uniquely American, like speaking English, eating pizza, dancing the salsa, introducing new words into the

and run six days. The Air Force will use three C-130s from the 36th Airlift Squadron from Yokota Air Base to make the trips. Each plane will make one flight a day, taking four to 10 pallets at a time.

The flights are technically training flights, Hicks said, though instead of using false drops, the crews can test their accuracy with real goods. All told, the drops will go to 68 islands throughout Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The effort began shortly after World War II, when a military plane on Christmas day flew over one of the tiny islands and the crew saw residents waving. Crewmembers made a makeshift care package from its stock in the plane and parachuted it down, Hicks said.

The donations have continued to arrive by parachute, because the islands are spread far apart and most do not have airports, he said.

Each pallet contains some toys and games, Hicks said. "We try to concentrate on toys that don't require batteries."

guest would show a voucher from the hotel as proof.

A crew said their ship was also charged with the same fee that CPA charges a person.

Last week, the CPA announced that a "nominal" hike in airport fees has already been in effect while the fee hike for seaport activities will be implemented in mid-January 2009.

The increases have been between 5 and 10 percent as recommended by CPA's bond consultant for the airport, Ricondo Associates.

The BST Associates rate study also recommended a 20-percent hike in seaport fees but this figure is still being finalized by the management and the board.

Last month, the CPA board approved the increase in the parking fee for taxis and buses at seaport properties from \$5 to \$25, the same rate charged by the airport.

CPA

From Page 1

of the implementation of the new fee at the Tinian port.

Perez said they are also implementing the same to passengers at the airport.

He said they expected to meet some negative reactions from the public but he said this is natural because it's the first day of implementation.

"We are here to observe. This is the transition period and we are expecting some difficulties," Perez said.

A representative from Tinian Shipping, Antonio Sunga Jr., was also seen assisting passengers.

According to Sunga, an agreement was reached between Tinian Shipping and CPA that all fees for the hotel guests must be charged to the hotel.

This is provided, however, that the

TO FUND CONFERENCE FOR YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Legislative leaders ask Pula for \$40,000

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_deletorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Top leaders of the Legislature have requested a \$40,000 grant from Office of Insular Affairs to assist the CNMI in hosting the annual conference of youth service providers in Micronesia.

In a joint Dec. 11 letter to OIA Director Nikolau Pula, Senate President Pete P. Reyes and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios said the funding will be used to cover the cost of travel for youth and service provider participants from Guam and other neighboring islands.

Reyes and Palacios said the money will also be used to pay for the cost of the three-day conference, which will take place

March 30 to April 1, 2009.

The Micronesian Youth Services Network plans to hold its 5th Annual Conference on Saipan. The theme is "Strengthening Micronesian Communities: One Youth at a Time."

Youth service providers from the CNMI, Guam, Palau, and Chuuk organized the MYSN in 1990. A non-profit organization, MYSN was formed to follow other regional groups such as the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures.

MYSN's primary purpose is to encourage youth service providers, educators, and other youth advocates to develop and support policies and best practices in their work for young people. It is also intended to

facilitate regional exchange and dialogue on common areas of concern and interest.

Reyes and Palacios informed Pula that last Nov. 28, they met with members of MSYN, Guam Labor Director Maria S. Connelly, and Sanctuary Inc. executive director Sarah M. Thomas-Nededog where the planned conference was discussed.

"We fully support this conference as the CNMI is faced with several social economic challenges," the two lawmakers said.

In recent weeks, Reyes and Palacios said there has been a rash of violent crimes involving the island's youth. "One such crime involved the murder of a high school security guard and

another involving a violent car-jacking," they said.

Efren Ballesteros was murdered and robbed during a burglary at Marianas High School in Susupe last month. Three MHS students are facing charges.

The two lawmakers added that there have been several re-

ports of school violence from the elementary levels through high school.

Reyes and Palacios said they believe that the conference presents an opportunity to share information in order to better address youth issues of the region.

"However, given the current

economic climate in the CNMI, Guam and Micronesian, the local business sectors and local governments are unable to provide the needed funding to ensure participation from all sectors and from all the Micronesian islands," Reyes and Palacios told Pula.

2 masked men fire guns but fail to rob Korean woman in San Vicente

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The police reported yesterday an attempted robbery case in San Vicente where two masked men attacked and fired shots at a 54-year old Korean woman as they tried to rob her in broad daylight.

DPS said it received reports about gunshots being fired and an injured person around 9:16am on Sunday, Dec. 14. It immediately dispatched police officers and medics to an apartment complex behind the CYC Store.

Police did not release the name of the victim, pending further investigation.

According to preliminary investigation, the victim had just parked her vehicle in the parking lot when one of the suspects approached her as she was about to come out from her vehicle.

The police report said the suspect began hitting her in the head, but she managed to tighten her grip on her purse when the suspect tried to grab it from her.

The suspect also hit the victim with a hammer during the struggle. He also shot a gun at

her five times but the bullets missed her.

The victim told police that a second suspect, who was also wearing a mask, fired a gun several times into the air.

After her attackers failed to take away her purse, the suspects fled the scene in two sedans. One of the getaway vehicles was colored green and the other was gold.

A reward of up to \$1,000 will be given to anyone who could provide information about this case. The NMI Crime Stoppers Hotline is 234-7272.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Marianas High School schedule

Dec. 17 2nd quarter mid progress report day, 4pm-6pm. Parents/guardians pick up reports from homeroom teachers (Students will be released at 1pm).

Dec. 24-Jan. 2 No classes (Christmas break)

For questions and concerns contact 237-3206. (PR)

SSHS PTA meeting, mid-progress reports

To all parents, legal guardians of Saipan Southern High School: There will be a PTA meeting tomorrow, Dec. 17, 2008, at 6pm in the cafeteria, and also mid-progress report will be issued from 4pm to 7pm. The reports may be picked up at the teachers' classrooms. All students will be dismissed at 1pm. (PR)

Kagman High calendar of activities

■ Dec. 16 PTSA at Kagman High School cafeteria. We will connect with Tanapag Elementary School library. Parents/guardians from the northern side of Saipan can come to Tanapag and participate in this meeting via teleconference/

polycom from 6pm to 7pm.

- Dec. 17 Parent Advisory Committee meeting
- Dec. 18 Principals' meeting
- Dec. 22 KHS accreditation team meets with BOE/COE
- Dec. 23 Christmas 2008 bash at the school campus, 6pm-10pm.
- Dec. 24 2008 to Jan. 4 2009: Christmas break
- Jan. 5 2009 Classes resume

Live-fire training on Farallon

The U.S. military is currently conducting live-fire training on the island of Farallon de Mendenilla until Dec. 19, 2008, from 9am to 9pm, on the island's training area on a 10 nautical radius on all quadrants.

Due to the danger imposed by this activity, the Emergency Management Office is advising the public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—to stay away from this area during the time and dates indicated.

For more information, contact the EMO Operations Section at telephone numbers 322-9528 and 322-9529, VHF Marine CHNL 16 and HF single side band radio on 5.205.0. (EMO)

Legislative calendar

Public hearings on House Bills 16-147 (juvenile interrogation); 16-178 (re juvenile justice reform); 16-157 (the Incompetency Determination Act); and 16-158 (the Guardianship Act)—Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 9am in the House Chamber; Wednesday, Dec. 17, 8am-5pm in the Rota Courthouse; and Thursday, Dec. 18, 8am-5pm in the Tinian Courthouse. For more information contact JGO chair Rep. Rosemond Santos at 664-8965.

Vendors sought for Puengin Inetnon

The Kagman Komunitad Association is looking for interested vendors to sell food, clothing, games, and other types of family oriented entertainment for "Puengin Inetnon."

"Puengin Inetnon" is Chamorro for "a night of gathering."

It will be similar to the Thursday Night Street Market in Garapan except that it will be held every government payday Friday at the Kagman Community Center. Interested vendors, volunteers, and performers may call the Kagman Post Office at 256-POST for more info. (PR)

LIVING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Sister Remedios Kindergarten students, with the help of parents Paula Castro, Maise Tenorio, Joan Dubral and Tania Mesa and their teachers, Victoria Aguon and Lourdes Leong, are making Christmas Cards for the men and women who are deployed and who will not be home with their families this Christmas.



BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT

Birthday greetings go out to Hank P. Arurang Jr., who is celebrating his birthday today, Dec. 16. "Happy birthday and may you have a wonderful and enjoyable day on your birthday." Greetings come from your Dad, Mom, Conseco John and Chicko Hensus.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Belated happy birthday to Socorro, who celebrated her birthday on Dec. 14. Greetings from your Fiesta F&B Team! CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CREAM holds regular meeting

The Coalition for Recognition, Equality and Advancement of the American Ethnic Minorities, CREAM, held their regular meeting last Saturday, Dec. 13, 2008, at the Buniag Compound at Chalan Piao. Pepe Liwanag served as chair of the day and he conducted the order of the meeting.

The agenda of the meeting was the improved status for contract workers who have been living and working in the CNMI for 20 years and the granting of Immediate Relative status to parents of U.S. citizen children,

who will turn 18 years old by November 2009.

Also discussed was the planned Christmas family get-together party on Dec. 27, 2008, at 4pm at the Minatchom AtDAO. It was agreed that it will be potluck in nature. However, donations of whatever kind are also welcome and accepted. There will be music and entertainment during the event. Friends, concerned ethnic minorities and their families are welcome to join the fun and festivity.

US Delegate-elect Greg Kilili Sablan with his wife An-

drea attended the meeting and were asked to join the CREAM Christmas party, which they graciously accepted.

During the meeting, Kilili spoke and gave some insights on what he planned to do when the 111th US Congress starts on Jan. 6, 2009. CREAM appreciated and thanked the Sablan couple for their presence, support and assistance to the group.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10pm. The next meeting will be on Saturday, Dec. 20, 2008 at 5pm. (PR)

Hyatt celebrates movie-themed Christmas Party

Hyatt GM Nick Nishikawa aka *The Last Samurai*, second from left, poses with, from left, Tracy Turnblad from *Hairspray*, Uncle Fester from *The Addams Family*, and Britney Spears (Hyatt catering sales manager Vivian Taitano) during the Christmas Party held at the SandCastle on Dec. 11, 2008.

REY BELGADO



Big Mama and The Terminator pose with his bike at the SandCastle entrance.

REY BELGADO



The different managers of Hyatt Regency Saipan pose for a picture taking with the big boss, GM Nick Nishikawa.

REY BELGADO



Staff members of Hyatt Regency Saipan perform a Christmas number on stage.

REY BELGADO



Some of the wait staff of Hyatt have their picture taken during the party.

REY BELGADO



Some staff members perform a traditional dance.
REY BELGADO



Staff members perform a stunt with the small bike, jumping over a man lying on stage during a performance at the Hyatt Christmas party.

REY BELGADO



Picture taking with the staff.

REY BELGADO

JOETEN'S

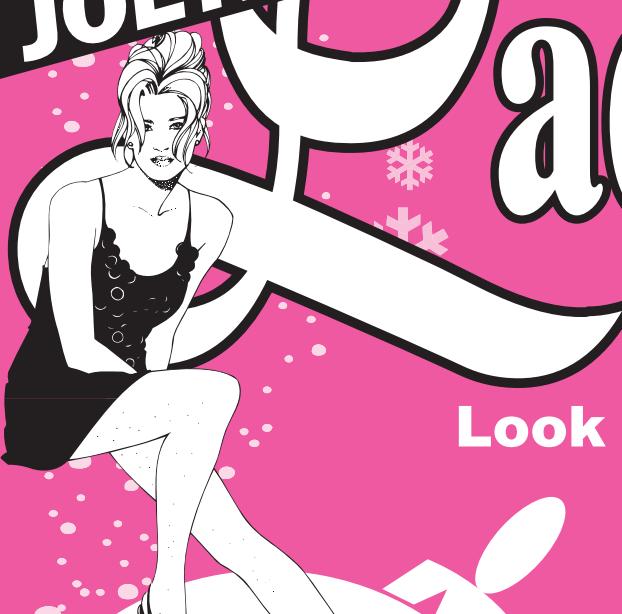
Ladies Night Sale!

Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2008
at 1:00 to 10:00p.m.

Look for these and more great savings
throughout our store!



Merry
Christmas



30% off

LADIES SKIRT SETS
AND PANT SETS



30% off

LADIES BLOUSES
AND SKIRTS



30% off

LADIES PANTIES
AND BRAS



30% off

LADIES BATHING/
SWIM SUITS



20% off

Bags and
Wallets



25% off

NECKTIES



25% off

Telephone and
Accessories



25% off

Shaver and
Hair Clippers



25% off

Hair Curlers
& Hair Dyers



25% off

Wicker
Baskets



25% off

Yardage



20% off

Seiko
Watches



25% off

Assorted
Branded TV



20% off

Electronics
Dept.



John Frieda
Shampoo or
Conditioner 8.45oz.

\$4.99

**Colorsilk
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\$4.99**

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\$1.89

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Pacific

A. Samoa hospital flooded by dengue

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—Doctors at the LBJ Hospital in American Samoa are advising patients afflicted with symptoms of dengue fever to take initial care at home before coming to the hospital.

The advice is being offered to help alleviate crowding in the ER or pediatric clinic, and reduce the waiting time to see the doctor.

Medical personnel recommend seeking medical treat-

ment if there is no change in their condition.

Dr. Ivan Tuliau, Medical Director at the Health Department says large numbers of adults and children are getting dengue:

"We do have quite a bit of numbers of the new strain, the type four. Previously the types were type one. This is actually a new strain."

There've been nearly 500 cases and 1 fatality since August.

30 nations OK cuts in Pacific tuna catch

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—A breakthrough has been claimed over an agreement to try to prevent overfishing of Bigeye and Yellowfin tuna in the Central and Western Pacific.

More than 30 nations gathered in South Korea and they agreed a range of measures to reduce the catch.

It will take more than a year to get close to the thirty per cent cut scientists had called for.

But the Executive Director of the Western and Pacific Com-

mission, Andrew Wright, says nevertheless if is a major step forward:

"I think to be able to get a commission such as this, with such a diverse range of interests, who first of all set an objective of achieving a 30

percent reduction in fishing mortality on the base, which aligns with the advice from the scientific committee that we currently have before us, just getting them to achieve to that objective is a fairly major achievement."

Tahiti teachers consider new strike

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (Radio New Zealand International/PIR)—The head of French Polynesia's teachers union, Marc Ploton, has not ruled out a new strike in an effort to protect French pensions for those retiring overseas.

Mr Ploton has told the Tahitipresse news agency that the

battle is not over in light of last week's ruling in Paris by the French constitutional court which annulled last month's pension reform.

The court agreed with the French opposition Socialists that the reforms, adopted by the French assembly and the senate, violated constitutional provi-

sions in place since 1946.

The French junior minister in charge of overseas territories, Yves Jego, is adamant that the reform will be adopted in a revised form.

But Mr Ploton has again called for a roundtable discussion on the planned cuts which the French government wants

to put in place for those retiring from next year.

French Polynesia's politicians have said the reform needs to be put off for a year to allow for a debate about its impact.

Last month, public servants in Tahiti staged a 15-day strike, closing schools and the port of Papeete in a bid to stop the planned cuts.



CONTINENTAL

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Continental Micronesia flight attendant Irene Redona-Carle gets inside the Ford Escape Hybrid that she won as part of her award for Perfect Attendance from January to July this year. Continental officers drew Redona-Carle's name and eight others from among the thousands of qualified employees entered in the Perfect Attendance Drawing. Since 1996, Continental Airlines has awarded employees to promote perfect attendance, giving away over 100 brand new cars, jet skis, and computers.

CONTINENTAL

PACIFIC BRIEFS

Vanuatu opposition withdraws 'no confidence' motion

PORT VILA, Vanuatu (Vanuatu Daily Post/PIR)—The motion of no confidence against Prime Minister Edward Natapei's leadership has had to be withdrawn yesterday by the leader of the Opposition Maxime Carlot Korman due to lack of majority support. Before the withdrawal Korman cited lack of copra subsidy and free education as the main reasons for re-tabling the motion—less than an hour after it had been defeated a week ago to undemocratic means to get elected more than 2 months ago. Parliament was called to debate the motion after a Supreme Court ruling last week against the speaker's decision not to entertain the motion, claiming the second ordinary session had already been closed.

China to help Samoa build solar power station

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)

—Samoa's Electric Power Corporation is looking to set up a five-megawatt solar power station in Samoa within two years, with the support of China. EPC general manager Muaausa Joseph Walter says experts from China's largest solar power manufacturing company have been invited to Samoa in January. "Namely SolaTek and we have a group of people coming from the company next month to do a feasibility study so we're looking at a low cost solution. I know the cost of the fuel has reduced recently but there is a belief that it will go up again in the not too distant future." Muaausa Joseph Walter says there is a need to avert any future power crisis, especially after last month's power shortage due to low level hydro plants as well as the rising cost of diesel.

U.S. drops charges against Samoa lawmaker

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)

—A United States federal court judge has dismissed the criminal charges against Samoa Member of Parliament Hans Joachim Keil, based on a motion filed by the U.S. attorney's office in Springfield, Missouri. The government's motion filed in court does not say the reasons for dropping the charges, except to say that in the interest of justice, asked the court to dismiss the case without prejudice. The government's motion was filed yesterday and immediately thereafter U.S. District Court judge James England granted the motion. Keil's U.S. based attorney, John Kizer, says he is pleased with the government decision to drop the case and this move vindicates Keil's claims that he is and has always been a U.S. citizen. Keil was arrested September 10th and charged with one count of falsely and willfully representing himself to be a U.S. citizen and one count of willfully and knowingly using and attempting to use a U.S. passport.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

December 16, 1998

Deficit beyond expectation: Sablan

With a record \$57 million deficit adding to CNMI's long list of financial woes, Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio's special advisor on budget and finance yesterday called for tighter fiscal discipline to keep government expenditures low and contain the deficit. Michael S. Sablan made fresh calls for extreme caution in spending public funds in light of a single audit report released yesterday by Deloitte & Touche which showed a \$22.5 million increase in deficit in FY 1997 from the previous fiscal year. Bulk of the deficit, the reports says, was incurred by the office of former governor Froilan C. Tenorio whose actual expenditures exceeded amount budgeted for that fiscal year by \$10.09 million.

Legislators raise poker fees by 33 percent

Saipan lawmakers yesterday voted to increase by 33 percent to \$8,000 the license fees for poker and pachinko slot machines on the island in a move to boost government revenues amid worsening economic crisis. In a session, most members of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation passed the local bill seeking additional \$2,000 on top of the current fee of \$6,000. Only Representatives Karl T. Reyes and Manuel A. Tenorio voted against it. At least \$1.5 million will be generated from the proposed fee hike—aside from some \$6 million that the cash-strapped government earlier has anticipated to earn from these amusement machines. The measure now heads to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio for signing.

December 16, 1999

Govt workers' insurance share to rise 50 percent

Due to skyrocketing costs of medical expenses, the CNMI Group Health Insurance Program will increase by 50 percent the premium contributions pitched in by government employees beginning Jan. 1, 2000. Even if the government cannot come up with an equivalent 50 percent share, NMI Retirement Fund Administrator Juan S. Torres said his office will still adjust the employees' rates. While private health insurance firms have been carrying out increases every year, this will be the second time that the CNMI Group Health Insurance Program will hike its employees' share since 1995.

Fire hits Mt. Carmel Cathedral

A small fire struck Mt. Carmel Cathedral yesterday afternoon, destroying glass windows and portion of the second floor of the 50-year-old church that has become a landmark on Saipan. No one was reported injured, officials said. According to Lt. Ray Villagomez of the Fire Division of the Department of Public Safety, the fire broke out at around 5pm and was declared under control 20 minutes later. Mr. Villagomez said it was too early to speculate as to what triggered the blaze that broke the glass windows along the front entrance of the church and portion of windows on the second floor.

December 16, 2002

Fuel shortage looms on Rota

ROTA, CNMI—With the Commonwealth Utility Corp.'s power plant still down and portions of Sinapalo Village being provided power only by generators from the Rota Resort Hotel, authorities are rushing to restore the damaged fuel pipeline at the eastern port as fuel stocks here are expected to run out in less than 20 days. Mayor Benjamin Manglona urged residents to bear with gas rationing, saying the emergency measure is necessary to prevent another catastrophe for the island. Each car is being limited to a maximum of 10 gallons a week. "We want to prevent a fuel crisis," Manglona said. "Since the Guam facility is on fire, our fuel source will be from Saipan."

Can the NMI match FEMA funds?

ROTA, CNMI—The question comes to mind as Mayor Benjamin Manglona disclosed that the estimated damage on the island wrought by super typhoon Pongsona has now amounted \$34 million. For the CNMI to tap into federal money allotted under the presidential disaster declaration, it has to put up 25 percent of any amount that would eventually be allocated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for Rota. Manglona said it might be difficult, however, for the CNMI government to come up with this amount, particularly since the entire Northern Marianas is experiencing an economic slump.

Cape Air posts outstanding performance in Q3

HAGĀTÑA, Guam—Continental Connection, operated by Cape Air, recently announced outstanding performance for third quarter of 2008.

"Cape Air completed the third quarter with the eight consecutive months of recording a 100 percent segment completion factor," said Continental Micronesia Guam and Micronesia director for sales and marketing David Kendall.

Achieving a 100 percent completion factor means that every flight was completed and without a single cancellation.

"Cape Air continues to operate at a high reliability factor and makes every effort to exceed customer expectations. The airline continues to serve the Marianas with an excellent product and quality service by offering on-time and reliable scheduled service well above industry averages, a comfortable flight using a pressurized cabin, and multiple flight schedules for intra-Marianas travel, which includes Guam, Saipan, and Rota," said Kendall.

Cape Air finished the third quarter with a 97.2 percent ar-

rivals within 14 minutes.

Additionally, there were seven consecutive months of 20 or more days of perfect days of no delays or cancellations.

In 2007, Cape Air flew over 680,000 passengers with over 120,000 flight operations in destinations around the world including New England, the Caribbean, Florida, Indiana and Micronesia.

As one of the largest independent regional airlines in the United States, Cape Air operates up to 900 daily flights during peak times in both U.S. domestic and

international markets. Cape Air has been serving travelers since 1989 and operates a fleet of 2 ATR42s and 49 Cessna 402s. An employee owned company, Cape Air has been honored by the Federal Aviation Adminis-

tration with the Diamond Award for Outstanding Maintenance.

Celebrating 40 years of service in Guam and Micronesia, Continental Micronesia is headquartered in Guam and operates a Pacific hub from the A.B. Won

Pat International Airport. Continental Micronesia and its code share partner Cape Air operate 86 weekly commuter service flights between Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. (*Continental*)

Fiji regime to dissolve local government

SUVA, Fiji (Fijilive/PIR)—The Local Government Association will be meeting next week to decide on what stand to take after the interim government announced its intent to dissolve all municipal councils.

Association president Suva Lord Mayor Ratu Peni Volavola said most of the councils are opposed to the idea. Interim Local Government Minister Filipe Bole has announced that the municipal councils will

now be dissolved in January next year and not in October 2009 as earlier planned.

The interim government says the councils' operations are being hampered by political influences of the parties represented in the councils.

Bole said poor administration has seen rates uncollected and councils unable to fulfill their duties.

The country's longest serving mayor, Ba mayor councilor Praveen Bala said the

Local Government Association meeting is meant to show their dissatisfaction with the government.

Councils across the country said they had planned significant capital works for next year.

Volavola said in Suva's case, his council had plans to re-develop the seaside so shops and a shopping mall could be built. According to Volavola, these were plans intended to boost Suva's economy.

Tongan government hangs on to troubled paper

NUKUALOFA, Tonga (Matangi Tonga/PIR)—Although the government-owned and operated *Tonga Chronicle* is being outsourced for a new management, expected to take over in January 2009, the government will retain ownership and editorial control of the loss-making weekly newspaper that it is currently heavily subsidizing. It is hoped that private management might be able to fund the operation.

Prime Minister Feleti Sevele yesterday confirmed that the government would continue to hold ownership of the 44-year-old newspaper. The Prime Minister said the government still wants to have an input in the operation of the newspaper, which they view as a vital source of information for people.

"We do not want to see any reporting that would cause slander cases like it has with the Tonga Broadcasting Commission, take place. But if they operate well and we believe they are managing it well, then, why not, we will eventually leave them to operate within their own," said the Prime Minister.

He also said another example of putting out government entities to the private sector was Television Tonga 2 and how it had leased out its six hours to the Taimi Production Network, saying, "I think competition is good." He said the outsourcing of the *Chronicle* was also a part of government's program of privatizing and letting go of its commercial activities for pri-

vate entities to operate.

Not for sale

The Deputy of the Prime Minister's Office Paula Ma'u said yesterday that the private entity selected for the job is expected to start in January 2009 and the Expressions of Interest would close on Dec. 19.

He clarified that the *Chronicle* was not being tendered out for sale, but they were looking for management.

"It simply means a transfer of the management or day-to-day execution of the entire business function to the successful bidder that will include their use of the Government owned equipment, staff and building."

Step to Privatization

Paula said this was the first step towards corporatization and eventually the privatization of the newspaper just as government had done in other commercial activities such as the Tonga Print, which was now privatized.

"This decision in regards to the *Chronicle* is made from inside government because the newspaper has been identified as a commercial activity of government ready to be corporatized and privatized, and this is an opportunity for it."

Paula said that once the successful bidder was selected, together with government they would decide how they would fund the newspaper and whether government would still be needed to chip in. But at the same time the Expression of

Interest was seeking suitable, reputable organizations which can "manage, fund and operate the production and sales of the *Tonga Chronicle*."

"But if there are no successful applicants government will continue to operate the newspaper because it was established in July 1964 by His Late Majesty with the objective, 'to disseminate responsibly-gathered and written information,' and the first duty of a newspaper is public information, and its direction should be governed first and foremost by this objective," said Paula.

Decline in Sales

He also noted that one important aspect of the *Chronicle* was that it was never meant to be operated on a business plan to make profit, rather it was just one of services provided by government. Proceeds from sales may meet the production costs but he said that government met other expenses, like salaries.

"But to date the paper did not make a profit as such, and with competition in the sector, sales declined as well as the production of the *Tonga Chronicle*."

He also said that the Expression of Interest also stated that the Editorial Policy must comply with the law and a high standard of responsible media ethics that shall be overseen by government and the successful applicant.

Paula noted that a company bidding for the management needed to have experience in management of media related activities.



GUAM SOLDIERS

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Soldiers of the Guam Army National Guard's "Ayuyu" Company, 1st Battalion ("Chamorro"), 294th Infantry Regiment are seen here in formation at the Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. The soldiers are scheduled to return to Guam after being deployed to Afghanistan this February in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terror. The bulk of the soldiers arrived at Andersen Air Force Base on Dec. 9, which left over 30 soldiers in Hawaii pending demobilization requirements. The remaining soldiers are expected to return throughout the next couple of weeks.



Members of the Guam Army National Guard enjoy a Thanksgiving Holiday Meal, barbecue-style, at Richardson Field, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Nov. 27., with the help of the Battalion's Family Readiness Group and the Purple Ribbon Campaign.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sikua defends \$21,000 payment to Solomons ministers

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Solomon Star/PIR)—

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Derek Sikua has clarified why Members of Parliament have been paid SB\$150,000 [US\$21,500] each.

He says MPs will use the money to meet freight charges of goods they will buy with livelihood funds for projects in their constituencies.

Prime Minister Sikua says the money is also a refund to some

MPs who had paid the freight charges themselves.

Dr Sikua was responding to a report in the Island Sun newspaper which had claimed among other things that the payout was his attempt to keep the CNURA grouping together.

The report added that some of them are planning to visit Mainland China before Christmas.

He says there is nothing sinister about the payout, but a positive response from the Gov-

ernment to the MPs' request for reimbursement and to pay for freight charges of goods being obtained for projects in their constituencies under the livelihood funding.

Meanwhile, Dr Sikua categorically denies some members of the CNURA grouping are planning a trip to the Mainland China.

He says none of the partners of the CNURA Government has discussed taking such a trip.

Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Climate change lessons

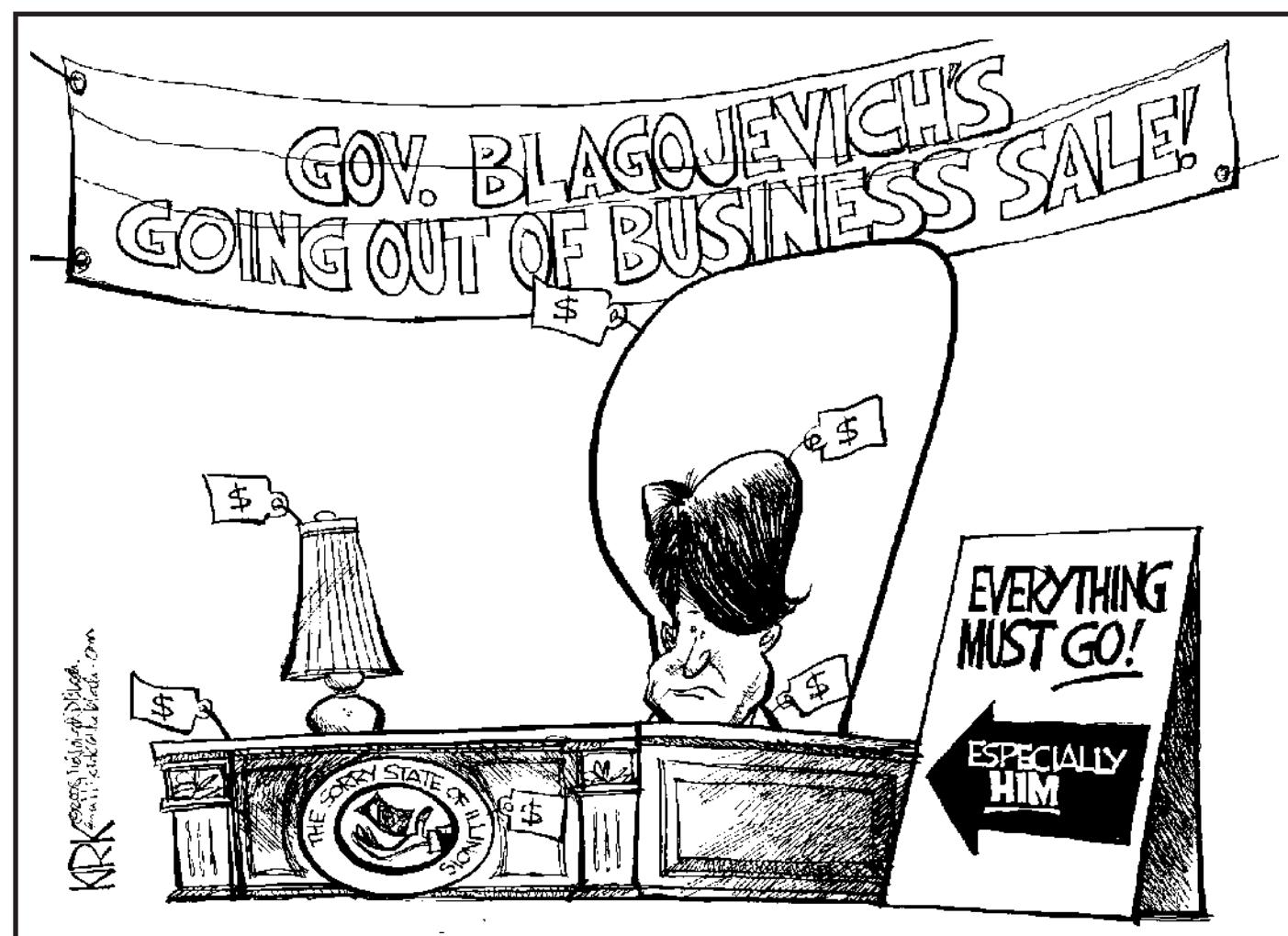
President-elect Barack Obama is committed to ending the United States' inaction on global warming. He wants to reduce emissions through a cap-and-trade system. But a report from the Government Accountability Office on problems with Europe's system and the inability of climate talks in Poland last week to settle on a specific number for the "long-term global goal for emissions reductions" shows how difficult the task will be.

Obama wants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. He would accomplish this by auctioning all of the emission allowances that would be available through a cap-and-trade system that would put an annual declining cap on the number of pollution permits. The European Union created its own cap-and-trade system in response to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. But European experience shows that this complicated regime is no guarantee of success. The GAO report confirms that the European Union erred in its calculation of emissions and then compounded the error by giving away all of the pollution permits. The results were higher energy prices for customers and windfall profits for utilities.

The United States didn't sign Kyoto and has been roundly—and rightly—criticized for resisting efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions and thwarting attempts to establish a long-term goal with specific targets. The Europeans have been the chief critics, but they've had a hard time living up to their self-righteous railings against the United States. They haven't been terribly successful at meeting their own targets. At meetings in Brussels last week, a move to auction all emissions permits starting in 2013 was resisted by Poland and other Eastern European countries worried about the impact on their industries. So a two-tiered system was created. For Eastern European utilities, there would be an auction of 30 percent of emissions allowances in 2013, going to 100 percent by 2020. The rest of the E.U. power companies would have to buy all of their pollution permits in 2013. Meanwhile, the just-concluded U.N. gathering in Poznan, Poland, failed to quantify the goal that would be the foundation for Kyoto II, which is slated to be signed next December.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lessen dependence on fossil fuels, there must be a price on carbon. A cap-and-trade system is the easiest way to integrate into an international regime, but its pitfalls are legion. A gas tax would be simpler and less subject to bureaucratic manipulation and undermining by lobbying interests. It would be the easiest way to change behavior, meet emissions targets and spark the innovation that will produce the next generation of energy production that will save the planet. We hope that Obama will give this approach serious consideration as he takes up the mantle of leadership on global warming that President Bush shunned.

(c) 2008, The Washington Post



Hoaxes from the Holy Land

By NINA BURLEIGH
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Israeli authorities called it "the fraud of the century": fakes passed off as archaeological finds with biblical ties. The most notorious object was the James ossuary, a limestone box inscribed in Aramaic with the words "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." Five men were charged, and the trial has been dragging on for three years.

But it might all be crashing to a halt. A few weeks ago, the judge—who is hearing the case without a jury—told the government lawyers that he's not convinced the objects are forgeries and suggested that they consider dropping the matter. If the authorities can't make their case, experts warn that the antiquities market—and a proof-hungry religious public—inevitably would be fed groundbreaking biblical "discoveries" as far-fetched as Solomon's crown and Abraham's sandals.

The James ossuary first made world news in 2002. Hershel Shanks, an American lawyer and publisher of an archaeology journal for Bible history enthusiasts, arranged a news conference and presented the box as the first archaeological evidence of the materiality of Christ. Shanks then wrote a book, sold film rights and arranged a blockbuster museum exhibition in Canada. In 2003, tens of thousands of people waited in line in an Ontario January to file past it, some in silent prayer.

The James ossuary, however, was not discovered by archaeologists working at a dig. It emerged from the private antiquities market in Israel—a colorful, murky world in which a small group of licensed dealers buy and sell pieces of ancient history often illegally plundered from one of the 30,000 archaeological sites in Israel and the West Bank.

In Israel, news of the James ossuary quickly was overshadowed by another explosive discovery in early 2003—again from the private market—an inscribed stone purported to be the first archaeological evidence of Solomon's temple. Nicknamed the Joash Tablet, the sandstone held 16 lines of text remarkably similar to a passage in the Old Testament referring to repairs made to the temple.

The tablet was never officially exhibited: A man formerly with the Israeli secret service had been running around Israel with it in a case handcuffed to his wrist, showing it to selected authentication. Israeli authorities jumped in to investigate because of the tablet's obvious potential to inflame the ever-contentious issue of who should control the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

After a yearlong investigation, detectives traced the tablet and the ossuary to the same Tel Aviv collector, Oded Golan, who said he had purchased them but could never explain from whom. They found in his apartment and warehouses what they thought were materials for making fakes, suspicious half-made objects and plans for more. A panel of Israeli scholars was convened to inspect the tablet

and ossuary and declared both modern forgeries.

Golan and four others were charged with fraud, involving more than a dozen forged objects purportedly related to biblical events that they sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars, mostly to private collectors. Three of the defendants since have been dropped from the case. The only remaining defendants, Golan and a prominent Israeli antiquities dealer named Robert Deutsch, both maintain their innocence.

Prosecutors have been hamstrung. A craftsman based in Cairo's Khan al Khalili souk told police that he made some objects for the collector, but he wasn't inclined to testify and they cannot compel him to come to Israel. So prosecutors instead called a long list of archaeologists and epigraphers, experts in the minutia of ancient Christian and Jewish artifacts. These men and women, accustomed to working on dusty digs or answering questions from somnambulant students, were no match for nimble, expensive attorneys, among the best in Israel, working for the defense.

One by one, they either contradicted themselves on scientific technicalities or had their conclusions ripped apart by the defense's expert witnesses. One veteran Israeli archaeologist, Meyer Ben Dov, was so disheartened by what was happening that he told me "archaeology is on trial"—and it did not appear to be winning.

The case isn't over, but after the judge's comments in November, the American publisher Shanks issued a news release calling the James ossuary "vindicated," a claim religious bloggers have disseminated worldwide.

Readers of Shanks' Biblical Archaeology Review and others who insist on the authenticity of the objects willfully ignore the evidence involving the other, less famous objects in the trial. They view the case as a grudge match, in which secular scientists are pitted against religious believers, or Israel, or the Bible itself. This is patently ridiculous but not surprising. Biblical archaeology operates on an emotionally charged—and in many ways lawless—border where modern science meets ancient belief. The desire of the faithful for material proof drives scholarship as much as anything actually dug up from the sands of the Holy Land.

The scholars who authenticated the alleged forgeries haven't been accused of any legal wrongdoing nor have the people who profited from book, movie and museum deals. Biblical archaeology is rife with such characters—some with advanced degrees—who are expert at generating hype. They push hot buttons in theology and Middle East politics guaranteed to get attention and, eventually, money.

The trial will resume in six months, so prosecutors have a chance to pull together better evidence. But the potential collapse of the James ossuary case confirms two things. First, the underfunded and understaffed Israeli Antiquities Authority—charged with policing the antiquities trade and protecting dig sites—is not up to the task of rooting out and exposing world-famous fakes. Second, the Israeli legal system can't be the last word on the authenticity of objects that

See HOAXES on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Give back to vets who have given their all

During a recent visit to the veterans hospital in Los Angeles, I ran across a young man fresh out of the Army. He had fought in Afghanistan and was recovering from some of his wounds. He was also homeless and, quite frankly, a little frustrated by what he saw as cumbersome and inefficient layers of bureaucracy between the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

It had taken weeks to finish his separation paperwork, months to get his disability rating (which determines his compensation), and it will likely take years before he can be completely self-sufficient. Simple things like holding down a job and owning a home seem anything but simple to him right now.

"I gave my country 100 percent," he said. "All I ask for is 100 percent in return."

Maybe I'm biased, but that doesn't seem like too much to ask. It's not too much to ask that we bind the wounds of war. And we are. More than 35,000 troops have been injured in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, many of whom might have died had it not been for the excellent medical care they received at field and military and veterans hospitals all over the world.

But I worry a lot about the wounds we don't see, the ones we don't yet fully understand. Recent studies suggest that nearly 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have incurred traumatic brain injury, and a like number suffer from post-traumatic stress.

Many have both. And it doesn't help that there is still a stigma attached to mental health problems.

We have to move past that. We have to change our culture. Leaders at all levels need to step forward and seek for themselves and their people the counseling they all deserve.

Asking for help is not asking for too much.

It's also not too much to ask that we look after the families of the fallen. Not everyone makes it home from war. For each of the more than 4,800 servicemen and women who have been killed since 9/11, there are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives and children who suffer unspeakable loss. These families, too, have sacrificed so much—everything really—and we can't forget our obligation to stand by them for the rest of their lives.

The rest of their lives. That's a long time. But that's the debt we incur—to help our veterans and their families move on with the rest of their lives.

The truth is that they want the same things every other American wants. They want to own their own homes, find good jobs, send their children to good schools.

During that same trip to Los Angeles, I spent some time at a facility called New Directions. The staff there offers a wide variety of services for homeless veterans, including job training and placement, parenting and money management classes, legal and financial assistance, counseling and remedial education.

By MIKE MULLEN

Special to the Los Angeles Times

Mullen is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



Residents leave the program with a job, housing, a savings account, computer skills, renewed self-confidence and the support of mentors and peers.

The need is real. California has the largest population of homeless veterans in the nation, nearly 50,000—about 13,000 are in Los Angeles. And some experts believe we are producing homeless vets faster than we ever have. Programs like those at New Directions are a good start for these men and women, as are the Labor Department's "Hire Vets First," the VA's "Stand Down" counseling and assistance events, and numerous other grass-roots efforts. But so much more needs to be done.

As we get ready to celebrate the holidays—with hundreds of thousands of troops still deployed around the world and many others preparing to leave the service—we need to remember that important point.

We live in a country that doesn't force our young men and women to pick up arms and go fight. We don't have to. They do it willingly, even eagerly. Not because they enjoy danger or killing or sacrifice, but rather in spite of those things. They serve and they work so hard so that someday—maybe—our children and grandchildren might not have to.

All they want in return is our gratitude, 100 percent of it. It's not too much to ask.

Grace amid grief

By ADRIAN HONG

SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Dong Yun Yoon lost everything in a manner no one could have predicted or prepared for. Reports indicate a mechanical failure led an F/A-18D Hornet jet fighter to plow into his San Diego home on Monday, instantly taking the lives of his wife, two young daughters and mother-in-law. Video taken by bystanders to the accident showed the house destroyed in an inferno of swirling flames and dark smoke.

Then, the next day, during the stunned father's news conference, a pair of Marine Corps jets, not unlike the one that hit his home, roared overhead. It was almost too much to bear, even watching it on television.

No one would have blamed Yoon for expressing anger, or even rage, on Tuesday. His world had crumbled in an instant.

But despite his own overwhelming circumstances, amid tremendous sorrow, Yoon began his remarks with a request for support for the pilot, who ejected before the crash and survived.

"I heard the pilot is safe. Please pray for him not to suffer from this accident. I know he is one of our treasures for our country. I don't blame him. I don't have any hard feelings. I know he did everything he could," Yoon said.

In fact, Yoon blamed himself, as he spoke of his father-in-law on the way from South Korea to grieve for his lost wife, daughter and granddaughters. "I don't know what to tell him. I don't know how he'll ever forgive me."

In 1873, a man named Horatio Spafford sent his family to Europe ahead of him as he was delayed on business. On Nov. 22, the ship Ville du Havre, with Spafford's wife and four daughters among the 313 on board, collided with an iron clipper. All four of his daughters died; his wife, Anna, was found floating unconscious on a plank of wood. She later cabled back to her husband in Chicago a short message: "Saved alone. What shall I do . . . ?"

Spafford went on to write one of Christianity's most beloved hymns, *It Is Well With My Soul*, which speaks of rest in the soul despite moments when "sorrows like sea billows roll."

Then and now, facing unspeakable tragedy, anonymous, quiet people have reminded the world what it means to be a person of character, dignity, compassion and grace.

Yoon said Tuesday, as jets drowned out his voice: "I know there are many people who have experienced more terrible things. Please tell me how to do it, because I don't know what to do."

He showed us exactly what to do, and reminded everyone watching of the better angels of our nature.

Hong is a human-rights advocate in Los Angeles.

Letters to the Editor

Thank you



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Philip Aldan, Jeffrey Sablan, Clement Kaipat, Norman Deleon Guerrero, and Patrick Ogo display the care packages they received from the CNMI.

To the CNMI community:

We, Philip Aldan, Jeffrey Sablan, Clement Kaipat, Norman Deleon Guerrero, and Patrick Ogo, from the 4th PLT (FEMA), E. Co., 100BN 442IN, would like to sincerely thank all those who took the time to prepare and send us the care packages. We would also like to send out our gratitude to all the students who wrote letters of support and encouragement. The care packages and letters have made a huge difference during our deployment. We understand that, although it may be difficult for us here in theater, it is also hard for those we have left behind back home and we would like to thank the CNMI community for showing us you care.

Thank you and *si yu'uus ma'ase*.

Philip Aldan
Jeffrey Sablan
Clement Kaipat
Norman Deleon Guerrero
Patrick Ogo
Pad 14, Tent 32

HOAXES

From Page 10

have the potential to excite millions of faithful.

So while policing the private trade in objects is a matter for the Israeli authorities, sober and serious biblical scholars need to take steps to shield the public from their more ruthless colleagues. All

finds with remarkable biblical connections emerging from the private market ought to be inspected by a team of disinterested experts before anyone calls a news conference.

The only trouble is, in this field, disinterested individuals are the rarest finds of all.

Burleigh is the author of Unholy Business: A True Tale of Faith, Greed and Forgery in The Holy Land.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.pr.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly sunny with a slight chance of early morning showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of late night and early morning showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of late night and early morning showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of late night and early morning showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of late night and early morning showers.

▲87° ▾77°

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
▲88° ▾77°	▲88° ▾78°	▲88° ▾77°	▲88° ▾77°

▲88° ▾77°

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
▲88° ▾78°	▲88° ▾77°	▲88° ▾77°

▲88° ▾78°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲85 ▾76
Palau	Showers	▲86 ▾78
Yap	Showers	▲86 ▾76
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	▲90 ▾80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲87 ▾74
Kosrae	Showers	▲90 ▾79
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	▲84 ▾75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲75 ▾61
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲48 ▾19
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲73 ▾61
Honolulu	Showers	▲81 ▾70
London	Cloudy	▲46 ▾45
Los Angeles	Showers	▲56 ▾43
Manila	Partly Sunny	▲86 ▾71
Melbourne	Showers	▲68 ▾55
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲79 ▾66
New York	Rain	▲45 ▾35
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲53 ▾39
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲37 ▾29
Pusan	Sunny	▲53 ▾37
Rome	Showers	▲52 ▾46
Salem	Cold	▲25 ▾20
San Francisco	Showers	▲47 ▾39
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲48 ▾37
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲52 ▾39
Washington, DC	Rain	▲45 ▾35

Tides

Saipan Harbor	
4:11AM Today	Low Tide: 0.7 Feet
11:29AM Today	High Tide: 2.0 Feet
4:55PM Today	Low Tide: 1.3 Feet
9:27PM Today	High Tide: 1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:36AM	5:50 PM	Today	9:39PM	9:48 AM
Wednesday	6:36AM	5:50 PM	Wednesday	10:36PM	10:34 AM
Thursday	6:37AM	5:50 PM	Thursday	11:30PM	11:15 AM
Friday	6:37AM	5:51 PM	Friday		11:53 AM
Saturday	6:38AM	5:51 PM	Saturday	12:21AM	12:30 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Guam-Manila	
CO 893	5:50pm 9:10pm 3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm 9:40pm Daily
PR 111	6:00am 7:50am 1,2,4,6,7

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 19, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO 9597 11:50am 12:25pm 1,7

Saipan-Guam

CO 9317 5:00am 5:50am Daily
CO 9313 8:30am 9:20am Daily
CO 9597 11:50am 1:20pm 1,7 via Rota
CO 9601 12:30pm 1:20pm 2,3,4,5,6
CO 9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily
CO 9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily
CO 9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598 3:25am 4:00am 5,6

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316 2:30am 3:20am 1,2,3,4,7
CO 9598 2:30am 4:00am 5,6 via Rota
CO 9596 7:00am 7:50am Daily
CO 9600 10:20am 11:10am Daily
CO 9602 2:00pm 2:50pm Daily
CO 9604 5:00pm 5:50pm Daily
CO 9606 8:00pm 8:50pm Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 099 5:00am 7:40am Daily
NW 078 8:25am 1:30pm 2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075 4:55pm 7:30pm Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078 8:25am 11:05am Daily

Saipan-Incheon

OZ 604 2:10am 6:00am 1
OZ 604 2:40am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606 3:20pm 7:00pm Daily

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608 3:50am 7:20am 1,4,5,7

Saipan-Shanghai

FM 844 2:50am 5:40am 2,6

Rota-Guam

CO 9597 12:50pm 1:20pm 1,7

Guam-Rota

CO 9598 2:30am 3:00am 5,6

Manila-Guam

CO 892 10:10pm 5:30am+1 3,5 via Koror
CO 934 11:10pm 4:40am+1 Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily	FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily	FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily	FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily	FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily	FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily	Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily	FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily	FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily	FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily	FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
Saipan-Guam				FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 200	8:00am	8:30am	Daily	FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 200	8:50am	9:20am	Daily	FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 300	9:00am	9:30am	Daily	FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE							

Business

Not just super rich caught up in \$50B Madoff case

NEW YORK (AP)—From a Jewish youth charity in Boston to major banks as far afield as Zurich, the list of investors who say they were duped in one of Wall Street's biggest Ponzi schemes is growing.

Around the world, investors who sunk cash into veteran Wall Street money manager Bernard Madoff's investment pool spent the weekend calculating how much exposure they might have. The 70-year-old Madoff, well respected in the investment community after serving as chairman of the Nasdaq Stock Market, was arrested Thursday in what prosecutors say was a \$50 billion scheme to defraud investors.

One thing was clear in the fallout from his arrest: The alleged victims span from the super rich, to pensioners and powerful financial institutions, to local charities. Some investors claim they've been wiped out, while others are still likely to come forward.

"There were a lot of very sophisticated people who were duped, and that happens a great deal when you've had somebody decide to be unscrupulous," said Harvey Pitt, a former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, a regulator in charge of monitoring investment funds like the one Madoff operated.

"It isn't just the big investors," he said. "There's a lot of charitable and foundation money involved in this, which is the real tragedy."

Charities across the country are expected to be directly affected by the collapse of Madoff's investment fund. The assets of Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities LLC were frozen Friday in a deal with federal regulators and a receiver was appointed to manage the firm's financial affairs.

One of the largest financial scams to hit Wall Street has investors wondering if they'll



Bernard L. Madoff, chairman of Madoff Investment Securities is seen on his Manhattan trading floor in this photo taken Dec. 30, 1999 in New York.

ever get their money back.

In Boston, the Robert I. Lappin Charitable Foundation, a charity that financed trips for Jewish youth to Israel, said on its Web site Sunday that the money for its operations was invested with Madoff.

"The money needed to fund the programs of the Lappin Foundation is gone," it said. "The foundation staff has been terminated today."

New Jersey Sen. Frank Lautenberg, one of the wealthiest members of the Senate, entrusted his family's charitable foundation to Madoff. Lautenberg's attorney, Michael Griffinger, said they weren't yet sure the extent of the foundation's losses, but that the bulk of its investments had been handled by Madoff.

Lautenberg's foundation handed out more than \$765,000 to at least 100 recipients in 2006, according to the most recent listing on Guidestar, which tracks charitable organization filings.

\$27B Marine Corps vehicle program at crossroads

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. (AP)—The Pentagon spent more than \$1 billion and 12 years developing a high-speed vehicle made to carry Marines from sea to shore only to have it fail miserably in 2006. It was overweight, sprung leaks and constantly broke down.

The Marine Corps and contractor General Dynamics Corp. now face another critical test. A failure this week for the vehicles designed to replace a Vietnam-era fleet could doom the \$27 billion program.

Any "show stopper" problems discovered during the review will be weighed to determine if the service's so-called Expedi-



This Oct. 9, 2008 photo provided by the U.S. Marines photos shows an Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) entering the water to execute test exercises off the coast of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

tionary Fighting Vehicle program moves forward to the next phase,

Marine Corps spokesman Dave Branham said last week.

Lawmakers estimate the do-over will cost U.S. taxpayers an additional \$1 billion, and the program already is deemed irrelevant by critics given the latest threats in countries like Afghanistan that have no access to water, and require more agile vehicles to navigate rocky terrain.

"Are we going to fight World War II again? Show me on the map where they are going to make an amphibious landing," said Col. G.I. Wilson, a retired Marine and contributing author to the new book, "America's Defense Meltdown," from the Center for Defense Information.

Fed will cut its rate in half—to just 0.50 percent. A few think the Fed could opt for an even more forceful action—lowering rates by a whopping three-quarters percentage point or more. If that larger cut occurs, it would be the lowest on records that track the monthly average of the targeted funds rate going back to 1954.

Oil rises to \$47 as OPEC prepares production cut

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices rose to above \$47 a barrel Monday in Asia as investors anticipated OPEC will announce a large production cut at its meeting this week. Light, sweet crude for January delivery was up 92 cents to \$47.20 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by midday in Singapore. The contract Friday fell \$1.70 to settle at \$46.28. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which accounts

for 40 percent of global supply, has signaled it plans to announce a substantial reduction of output quotas at its meeting Wednesday in Algeria. Iranian Oil Minister Ghosn Hosseini Nozari was quoted Sunday on his ministry's web site saying that Iran would push for a production cut of 1.5 to 2 million barrels per day. Analysts have questioned whether OPEC members will follow through with any announced cut.

Green activists find new ally in US unions

POZNAN, Poland (AP)—Some U.S. labor groups that have long feared environmental campaigns as a threat to American jobs are starting to see advantages in going green. This evolution was clear at this week's U.N. climate talks in Poland, where several American labor groups and environmental activists made joint appeals for policies that would

promote high-tech renewable energy as the answer to both climate change and job losses. About 25 representatives of U.S. unions were in Poznan—about twice the number at last year's U.N. talks in Bali, Indonesia—representing workers from the electrical, transit, steel, service and other sectors. "There is a very wide cross-section of American unions that reflects the growing engagement of American unions' support of climate change policies," said David Foster, executive director of the Blue Green Alliance. The group was founded by the United Steelworkers, North America's largest manufacturing union, and the Sierra Club, the United States' largest and oldest grass-roots environmental group. "There's a power in the joint vision that we just don't have functioning on our own," added Foster, who was for 16 years a United Steelworkers regional director.

Wall Street looks to Fed, auto bailout this week

NEW YORK (AP)—Don't expect Wall Street's turmoil to ebb in the year's last full week of trading as investors face questions about an auto bailout, the banking crisis, and the Federal Reserve's final rate-setting meeting of 2008.

The market, still hovering at decade lows, has yet to show any sign of a traditional year-end rally. And the next few days it will face a number of tests that could determine if investors are able to get past all the negative economic news to end the year on a bright note.

The fate of Detroit's three biggest automakers continues to be in question this week after the Senate failed to pass a \$14 billion bailout for the Chrysler LLC and General Motors Corp. Ford Motor

Co. has said in the past that it does not need government money to survive.

The White House this week is expected to unveil ways to provide emergency aid to the automakers, which have said they could run out of cash within weeks without government help. Many expect that the Bush administration will use money from the \$700 billion financial bailout fund to provide loans to the carmakers.

"If the administration had some notion that this was a house of cards, that this was going to bring the entire economy down, then they have the authority to write checks out of the already passed bailout program," said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Harris Private Bank in Chicago.

Discounts drive shoppers to stores this weekend

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Steep discounts on clothes, toys and electronics enticed shoppers to stores this weekend but they still are making fewer purchases leading into the final stretch of the holiday shopping season.

Based on early reports from analysts and malls, sales results were generally mixed to moderately down even as store traffic appeared strong this past weekend, the second-to-last of the season that can make or break many retailers.

Stores offered big discounts to shoppers who have been pulling

back their spending, concerned about the recession and job stability. Shoppers came to stores for these discounts but largely stuck to their shopping lists and basic items like clothing, analysts say.

Traffic levels at stores were comparable to last year, said Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at market research group NPD Group. People were looking for deals but not as willing to spend their money as last year.

"The number of consumers actually making purchases were down and when they did purchase they purchased less," Cohen said.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Fed mulls interest rate cut, maybe to all-time low

WASHINGTON (AP)—With the country spiraling deeper into recession, the Federal Reserve is ready to slash its key interest rate—perhaps to an all-time low—in hopes of cushioning some of the economic fallout felt by many struggling Americans. To battle the worst financial crisis since the 1930s, Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues already have ratcheted down their main lever for influencing the economy—the federal funds rate—to 1 percent, a level seen only once before in the last half-century. The Fed opens a two-day meeting Monday to assess the economy and decide its next move on rates. Another reduction to the funds rate, the interest banks charge each other on overnight loans, is all but certain to be announced Tuesday. Many economists predict the

Nation

Obama left with little time to curb global warming

WASHINGTON (AP)—When Bill Clinton took office in 1993, global warming was a slow-moving environmental problem that was easy to ignore. Now it is a ticking time bomb that President-elect Barack Obama can't avoid.

Since Clinton's inauguration, summer Arctic sea ice has lost the equivalent of Alaska, California and Texas. The 10 hottest years on record have occurred since Clinton's second inauguration. Global warming is accelerating. Time is close to running out, and Obama knows it.

"The time for delay is over; the time for denial is over," he said on Tuesday after meeting with former Vice President Al Gore, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his work on global warming. "We all believe what the scientists have been telling us for years now that this is a matter of urgency and national se-

curity and it has to be dealt with in a serious way."

But there are powerful political and economic realities that must be quickly overcome for Obama to succeed. Despite the urgency he expresses, it's not at all clear that he and Congress will agree on an approach during a worldwide financial crisis in time to meet some of the more crucial deadlines.

Obama is pushing changes in the way Americans use energy, and produce greenhouse gases, as part of what will be a massive economic stimulus. He called it an opportunity "to re-power America."

After years of inaction on global warming, 2009 might be different. Obama replaces a president who opposed mandatory cuts of greenhouse gas pollution and it appears he will have a willing Congress. Also, next year, diplomats will try to agree on a major new

international treaty to curb the gases that promote global warming.

"We need to start in January making significant changes," Gore said in a recent telephone interview with The Associated Press. "This year coming up is the most important opportunity the world has ever had to make progress in really solving the climate crisis."

Scientists are increasingly anxious, talking more often and more urgently about exceeding "tipping points."

"We're out of time," Stanford University biologist Terry Root said. "Things are going extinct."

U.S. emissions have increased by 20 percent since 1992. China has more than doubled its carbon dioxide pollution in that time. World carbon dioxide emissions have grown faster than scientists' worst-case scenarios. Methane, the next most potent greenhouse

gas, suddenly is on the rise again and scientists fear that vast amounts of the trapped gas will escape from thawing Arctic permafrost.

The amount of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere has already pushed past what some scientists say is the safe level.

In the early 1990s, many scientists figured that the world was about a century away from a truly dangerous amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, said Mike MacCracken, who was a top climate scientist in the Clinton administration. But as they studied the greenhouse effect further, scientists realized that harmful changes kick in at far lower levels of carbon dioxide than they thought. Now some scientists, but not all, say the safe carbon dioxide level for Earth is about 10 percent below what it is now.

ACROSS THE NATION

Closing arguments to begin in Fort Dix plot trial

CAMDEN, N.J. (AP)—They watched jihadist videos, listed to incendiary Islamist speeches, bought guns and practiced using them, and got a map of the Army's Fort Dix. And they were secretly recorded by FBI informants as they talked about bringing a holy war to America. But were the five men who spent years in the comfortable Philadelphia suburb of Cherry Hill really planning a home-grown terrorist attack on U.S. soil? Or were the foreign-born Muslims just jihad sympathizers who talked tough but had no real intention of killing anyone? After 26 days of testimony, jurors are to hear final arguments beginning Monday in the case against five men accused of planning to kill soldiers at Fort Dix. Deliberations are set to start Tuesday.

Family of fatally beaten NY immigrant urges action

NEW YORK (AP)—The brother of an Ecuadorean immigrant beaten to death in an apparent hate crime asked his neighbors Sunday for help finding the killers, saying he and his family were heartbroken. Diego Sucuzhanay called the brutal attack "a wake-up call" to the public. "It shows how far we must still come to address the devastating problem of hate crimes in our communities. Only by exposing these crimes and working together will we be able to make a difference," Sucuzhanay (pronounced suh-KOO'-chen-eye) said at a news conference outside the Queens hospital where his brother, Jose, died late Friday. He said a \$27,000 reward was being offered for information that could solve the crime. Jose Sucuzhanay, a 31-year-old real estate broker, was accosted on a Brooklyn street by men who yelled anti-Hispanic and anti-gay slurs at him and his brother, Rommel, early Dec. 7, according to police.

Travel discouraged in snowy and windy Dakotas

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP)—Blizzard conditions made travel hazardous Sunday across the northern Plains as officials closed major highways and urged people to stay home. The National Weather Service estimated as much as 13 inches of snow had fallen at Williston and about a foot in Bismarck, and strong wind whipped the powdery snow and cut visibility. Bismarck's temperature at 1 p.m. was minus 8 degrees, but the wind made it feel more like minus 3, Weather Service meteorologist Patrick Ayd said. "You need two parkas," he said. In Fargo, the Cass County sheriff's office said visibility was down to zero with heavy drifting on the roads. North Dakota officials said a 200-mile stretch of Interstate 94 was closed from Jamestown to Alexandria, Minn., along with the entire stretch of I-29 in the state from the South Dakota border to Canada. A section of I-29 north of Brookings, S.D., also was closed late Sunday morning.

Illinois legislators focus on ousting governor

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—Officially, Illinois lawmakers will gather soon to consider a special election to replace Barack Obama in the U.S. Senate—but it was already clear Sunday that ousting disgraced Gov. Rod Blagojevich was at the top of many to-do lists.

"On a scale of one to 10, impeachment is 25 and everything else is a two," said Rep. Jack Franks, a fellow Democrat from Woodstock.

A legislative session beginning Monday will be the first since Blagojevich was arrested last week on charges that he tried to profit from his power to choose Obama's replacement and shook down

businesses seeking state deals.

Republicans said Sunday that they plan to put intense public pressure on Democrats to move against Blagojevich. A spokesman for Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan said he will discuss the idea with Republican leaders on Monday.

Meanwhile, Blagojevich was expected to firm up his legal representation after meeting over the weekend with Chicago attorney Ed Genson, who has defended media mogul Conrad Black and R&B singer R. Kelly. On Sunday, Blagojevich's wife, Patti, went into Genson's building.

Genson, a bulldog who generally takes his cases to trial, has said he and the governor would make a "mutual decision" on Monday. Blagojevich spokesman Lucio Guerrero said the governor "has no plans on resigning Monday."

Guerrero didn't respond directly to whether the governor could or would do anything to slow down the Legislature's move toward impeachment.

"The governor has indicated in the past there is more to this story that he's wanting to tell at an appropriate time," he said.

David Dring, spokesman for House Minority Leader Tom Cross, R-Oswego,

said Republicans will step up the pressure on Democrats to remove Blagojevich.

"If they won't work with us, you'll probably see some good theater," Dring said. The GOP also plans to run television ads pressuring Democrats to approve a special election to replace Obama. Blagojevich still holds the power to appoint a new senator, and if he resigned, that power would go to Democratic Lt. Gov. Patrick Quinn.

Illinois Republican Party chairman Andy McKenna told reporters the ads will "make the point that this is the people's seat, and the people deserve a special election."

More power loss possible in ice-ravaged Northeast

JAFFREY, N.H. (AP)—Joined by people seeking shelter from the bitter cold, parishioners at the Jaffrey Bible Church on Sunday thanked God for a warm place to sleep and for the utility crews struggling to repair power lines snapped by New England's devastating ice storm.

"Your fellow Jaffrey residents have stepped up and made this a more bearable situation," Walt Pryor, recreation department director for the town of 5,700, told the congregation Sunday morning.

Church administrator Rick Needham noted the "terrible devastation in our lives and homes," recognizing two families whose homes were damaged by falling trees. About 150 people attended Sunday's service in Jaffrey, about 15 miles from the Massachusetts state line.

The church had been turned into a shelter, with cots and mattresses set up in offices and hallways, and televisions and 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzles for children in the basement. Donated food was plentiful, including lobster casserole, pot roast, and barbecued chicken.

The ice storm knocked out electrical service to 1.4 million homes and businesses late last week.



BIG FOOT RIDE

American Indians on the Big Foot Memorial Ride gather at Wounded Knee, S.D., on Dec. 28, 2007. This year's nearly 300-mile Big Foot Memorial Ride to remember the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre starts Monday, Dec. 15, 2008.

Palin's burned-out church holds services elsewhere

WASILLA, Alaska (AP)—Members of Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin's church gathered in high spirits at a middle school Sunday, two days after their building was badly damaged by a fire authorities are investigating as arson.

Palin, the former Republican vice presidential candidate, did not attend services Sunday because she was in

Juneau preparing to propose a state budget, said her spokesman, Bill McAllister.

The congregation realizes the church is more than the building, said John Doak, associate pastor at Wasilla Bible Church.

"The definition of the church is the body of Christ, made up of God's people," Doak said after the hourlong ser-

vice at Wasilla Middle School attended by about 1,200 people. "The church is still there. We are the church."

Damage to the 2 1/2-year-old church building is estimated at \$1 million. The blaze was set at the main entrance Friday night while a small group, including two children, were inside. No one was injured.

Asia

Thai opposition leader becomes prime minister

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Lawmakers chose an opposition leader as Thailand's prime minister Monday in a bid to end months of political chaos, as supporters of the previous government unsuccessfully tried to halt the result by blockading Parliament.

The articulate, Oxford-educated Abhisit Vejjajiva, who heads the Democrat Party, gathered 235 votes against 198 by former national police chief Pracha Promnok, a loyalist of exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

The lower house vote followed six months of instability caused by anti-government and anti-Thaksin demonstrations that culminated last month with a weeklong takeover of Bangkok's two airports.

The selection of a new prime minister was expected to calm the country's politics, at least temporarily. However, several hundred Thaksin supporters tried to block the gates of Parliament in a last-ditch attempt to prevent the outcome. Riot police later cleared a path for lawmakers to leave the compound.

The demonstrators surrounded vehicles and hurled abuse at lawmakers inside but most dis-



chai Wongsawat, who is Thaksin's brother-in-law.

The remnants of the PPP regrouped as the Phuea Thai Party, which were also seeking a majority in Monday's session.

The anti-Thaksin protest movement seeks to purge politics of the influence of Thaksin—who was ousted by a 2006 coup after being accused of corruption and abuse of power—and has threatened new but unspecified activities if Parliament elects a leader with links to him.

"The Democrats are positioned to win this round. They seem to have the votes, the support of the private sector and the business community which hopes for temporary respite," said Sukhum Nuansakul, a political scientist at Bangkok's Ramkhamhaeng University, shortly before the vote began.

"But the peace is likely to be short-lived. The fundamental problem has not been resolved," Sukhum said. "A Democrat win sets the stage for another round of street protests, this time by pro-Thaksin groups."

Thaksin now lives in exile, having fled Thailand ahead of an October conviction on a conflict of interest charge.

persed peacefully, saying that they would gather again later Monday in the capital's old historic section.

Following the vote, Abhisit—at 44, one of the world's youngest heads of state—thanked fellow lawmakers and the public but said he would not talk about politics until

he was officially endorsed as prime minister by the constitutional monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The chamber normally has 480 members, but because of vacancies currently numbers 437. One MP died on the eve of the voting.

Despite Monday's protest

outside Parliament, analysts foresee relative stability in coming months following political chaos and the airport siege which ended after a court ruling on Dec. 2 dissolved the ruling People's Power Party and two coalition partners. It also handed a five-year political ban to former premier Som-

Bush makes a brief stop in Afghanistan to rally troops

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—President George W. Bush got a firsthand look Monday at the deteriorating situation in the seven-year-old Afghanistan war, amid preparations in his administration to hand a broad strategy overhaul over to President-elect Barack Obama and to significantly increase the U.S. troop presence.

Bush spoke to U.S. soldiers and Marines stationed in Afghanistan at a hangar on the tarmac at Bagram Air Base. The rally for over a thousand military personnel took place in the dark, cold pre-dawn hours—it was about 5:30 a.m. local time when the president strode into the hangar to loud cheers.

"Afghanistan is a dramatically different country than it was eight years ago," he said. "We are making hopeful gains."

Bush then took a helicopter ride to Afghan President Hamid Karzai's palace in Kabul—the portion of the 40-hour journey that made his security detail the most nervous. At the compound, Bush and Karzai reviewed an honor guard dressed in long tunics of dusty blue and olive with yellow belts and epaulets.

Inside, Bush received a warm personal welcome from Karzai.

"I and the Afghan people are very proud and honored to the profoundest depth of our hearts to have President Bush with us

here today," Karzai said as they sat side by side.

But his message had a little sting. He emphasized how Bush's visit came only after repeated requests, and said he wished that Bush had more time and that the Afghan people could see Bush in person.

During a joint news conference after the meeting, Bush told Karzai he had an excuse for rushing back to Washington: His wife demanded his return to attend a holiday reception at the White House later Monday.

"After all, I did sneak out of town in the dark of night," he joked.

Bush said he is amazed and pleased by how much Afghanistan has changed in seven years, although he realizes there is much more difficult work ahead.

"I told the president, 'You can count on the United States,'" Bush said. "Just like you've been able to count on this administration, you'll be able to count on the next administration as well."

Karzai said his country doesn't want to depend on international handouts forever, but stressed the help will still be needed for some time—not before "we have taken from President Bush and the next administration billions and billions more dollars," he joked.

Mumbai attackers more tech savvy than police

MUMBAI, India (AP)—When the attackers arrived on the shores of Mumbai last month, they had studied satellite images of the city, were carrying handheld GPS sets and were communicating with their handlers via the Internet and satellite phone.

Many of the Indian police they encountered did not even have walkie-talkies.

The Mumbai gunmen not only overwhelmed security forces with their weaponry and willingness to die, but also with their sophisticated use of technology, security experts said.

"These (terrorists) are well aware of the technology available and also know that the

police are several steps behind. And a lot of this technology is extremely easy to use and to learn," said Pavan Duggal, a technology expert and New Delhi-based lawyer.

India's underfunded and poorly trained police force is simply unable to compete, experts said.

"Crimes that involve technology usually make the police very nervous," Duggal said.

To prepare for their Nov. 26 assault, militants examined the layout and landscape of the city using images from Google Earth, which provides satellite photos for much of the planet over the Internet, said Mumbai's chief police investigator,

Rakesh Maria.

The 10 gunmen also studied detailed photographs of their targets on laptop computers, Maria said. When the assailants traveled by boat from Karachi, Pakistan, to Mumbai—stealing an Indian trawler along the way—they used four GPS systems to navigate, Maria said. The sets could also be used as walkie-talkies.

The attackers were equipped with a satellite phone and nine cell phones. Throughout the attack, they called their handlers in Pakistan, who had eschewed conventional phones for voice-over-Internet telephone services, Maria said.

Britain promises more anti-terror aid to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—British Prime Minister Gordon Brown pledged more counter-terrorism help to Pakistan on Sunday, revealing that three-quarters of terror plots investigated in Britain linked back to al-Qaida supporters in the country.

Brown traveled to Afghanistan, India and Pakistan over the weekend to visit British troops and bolster cooperation between India and Pakistan in the wake of the deadly Mumbai attacks that killed more than 160 people.

But his strongest message was delivered to Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari, whose wife Benazir Bhutto

died last year in an attack launched by extremists.

Zardari faces a daunting challenge of tackling poverty and extremism in Pakistan as he tries to shore up support in the tribal regions and within his own government. Bhutto repeatedly alleged that Pakistan's security services had long-standing ties to extremist elements.

"The time has come for action and not words, and I want to help Pakistan and other countries root out terrorism," Brown told reporters in a joint news conference with Zardari.

Britain would offer Pakistan counter-terrorism equipment for detecting bombs

ASIAN BRIEFS

US senator serves military duty in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The men around Lindsey Graham ignored his powerful political title—U.S. senator—and instead addressed him by rank—colonel.

Graham, a Republican from South Carolina and the only U.S. senator in the military's Guard or Reserves, donned the Air Force's camouflaged uniform for five days last week to serve in Kabul. The senator enrolled in the ROTC in 1973 and has been in the Air Force Guard or Reserves as a military lawyer ever since. In Kabul, he worked with the staff of military lawyers at the U.S. base Camp Eggers. The office is helping to train military judges and defense lawyers, and to write Afghanistan's uniform code of military justice. Graham said his experiences in the military taught him how difficult wartime deployments can be on families. "One thing I learned is that when a soldier, airman or a Marine is away, the more we can take care of the family, the better they're going to be able to do their job because there's nothing worse than being deployed and having family problems," said Graham, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Turkmen voters elect parliament, no results yet

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan (AP)—Voters in Turkmenistan cast ballots Sunday in a parliamentary election hailed by the government as an exercise in democracy but dismissed by critics as a sham.

It was the first parliamentary election since the death of longtime autocrat Saparmurat Niyazov two years ago, which kindled hopes the Central Asian country would introduce greater freedoms. The government of his successor, President Gurbanguli Berdimukhamedov, has cast the election as an important step in the development of democracy, but opponents claim it is meant to appease Western countries eager to win access to its natural-gas reserves but wary of its record on human rights. A statement on the government Web site said the vote was held in "an atmosphere of openness" and reflected "the full depth of the democratic reforms being conducted in the nation."

Ferry capsizes in Philippines, drowning 22

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Police say a ferry with nearly 100 passengers has capsized in the northeastern Philippines, drowning more than 22 people and leaving 34 missing. Senior Inspector Alex de los Santos said the wooden-hulled ferry overturned in bad weather on Sunday evening while nearing Aparri town in Cagayan province, near the mouth of the Cagayan River. He says police and villagers have rescued 43 people. De los Santos says big waves were reported at the time of the accident.

World



In this series of images made from APTN video, Muntadar al-Zeidi, a correspondent for Al-Baghdadiya television, center, throws a shoe at U.S. President George W. Bush, background left, during a news conference with Iraq Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, background right, on Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008, in Baghdad.

Bush: Iraq war is not over, more work ahead

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—On a whirlwind trip shrouded in secrecy and marred by dissent, President George W. Bush on Sunday hailed progress in the wars that define his presidency and got a size-10 reminder of his unpopularity when a man hurled two shoes at him during a news conference in Iraq.

"This is your farewell kiss, you dog!" shouted the protester in Arabic, later identified as Muntadar al-Zeidi, a correspondent for Al-Baghdadiya television, an

Iraqi-owned station based in Cairo, Egypt. "This is from the widows, the orphans and those who were killed in Iraq."

Bush ducked both shoes as they whizzed past his head and landed with a thud against the wall behind him.

"It was a size 10," Bush joked later.

The U.S. president visited the Iraqi capital just 37 days before he hands the war off to his successor, Barack Obama, who has pledged to end it. The president wanted to

highlight a drop in violence and to celebrate a recent U.S.-Iraq security agreement, which calls for U.S. troops to withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2011.

"The war is not over," Bush said, but "it is decisively on its way to being won."

Bush then flew overnight to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan for a rally early Monday with more than 1,000 U.S. and foreign troops. "Afghanistan is a dramatically different country than it was eight years ago," he said. "We are

making hopeful gains."

He then took a helicopter ride to Kabul to meet with Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

After their meeting, Bush said he told Karzai: "You can count on the United States. Just like you've been able to count on this administration, you'll be able to count on the next administration as well."

The president was then leaving Afghanistan to fly to Britain, stopping to refuel and then continue home.

In many ways, the unannounced trip was a victory lap without a clear victory.

In Iraq, nearly 150,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq, protecting the fragile democracy. More than 4,209 members of the U.S. military have died and \$576 billion has been spent since the war began five years and nine months ago.

In Afghanistan, there are about 31,000 U.S. troops and commanders have called for up to 20,000 more. The fight is

especially difficult in southern Afghanistan, a stronghold of the Taliban where violence has risen sharply this year.

Polls show most Americans believe the U.S. erred in invading Iraq in 2003. Bush ordered the nation into war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq while citing intelligence claiming the Mideast nation harbored weapons of mass destruction. The weapons were never found, the intelligence was discredited, and Bush's credibility with U.S. voters plummeted.

WORLD BRIEFS

Somali president fires premier; new chaos ensues

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—Somalia's president fired his prime minister Sunday and accused him of paralyzing the government with "corruption, inefficiency and treason." Hours later, as the government veered toward collapse, Islamic insurgents held a brazen news conference in the capital and vowed never to negotiate with the leadership. President Abdullahi Yusuf announced his decision in Baidoa, one of the few towns the government still controls. Islamic militants accused of ties to al-Qaida have taken over most of the country. "The government has been paralyzed by corruption, inefficiency and treason," Yusuf said. He will name a new prime minister in three days, he said. The prime minister, Nur Hassan Hussein, promised to challenge his dismissal, saying the president lacked the authority to fire him. The president said Somalia itself lacked a legal government because too many ministers have already resigned. "The president was speaking in his usual personal capacity, which is always contrary to the country's existing rules and regulations," Hussein told The Associated Press.

Raul Castro salutes Chavez in 1st trip as prez

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Cuban President Raul Castro spent Sunday in private meetings with socialist ally Hugo Chavez after publicly thanking the Venezuelan president for helping Cuba through difficult times. Castro—on his first trip abroad since becoming Cuba's president—was not scheduled to appear in public the day after he and Chavez agreed to joint projects worth more than \$2 billion. Chavez, a longtime ally of Fidel Castro, gave Fidel's younger brother a warm welcome to Venezuela on Saturday, praising him for challenging U.S. "imperialism" for decades. Castro, in turn, thanked Venezuela for increasing cooperation with the communist-led island. "In the name of Cuba, we thank you for your solidarity with the Cuban Revolution," said the 77-year-old Castro. "We've been able to leave the difficult years behind." Fidel Castro signed Cuba's first cooperation agreement with Venezuela eight years ago.

Australia calls for 5-to-15 pct pollution cut

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Australia has announced a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by as little as 5 percent by the year 2020, far less than the 25 percent cut sought by environmentalists. A government policy document released Monday shows that Prime Minister Kevin Rudd remains committed to his campaign promise of slashing Australia's carbon emissions that are blamed for global warming by 60 percent from 2000 levels by 2050. But the document also sets an interim reduction range of only 5 percent to 15 percent by 2020. Environmental groups have been lobbying for months for a minimum reduction of 25 percent by 2020. The softest target of 5 percent would apply if the United Nations fails to reach a binding new agreement at Copenhagen next year involving developing as well as developed countries to make deep cuts in global emissions. The government argues that the target places a fair burden on Australia considering the nation's projected population growth by 2020.

Huge crowds gather in Gaza for Hamas anniversary



Plain clothed police officers detain an opposition demonstrator during an anti-Kremlin protest in Moscow, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008.

Police thwart Moscow rally, seize 90-130 people

MOSCOW (AP)—Police thwarted a banned anti-Kremlin protest in central Moscow on Sunday, seizing dozens of demonstrators and shoving them into trucks.

Organizers said 130 people were detained around the capital but police put the number at 90. The opposition movement headed by fierce Kremlin critic and former chess champion Garry Kasparov said the co-leader of the

group was one of those seized.

The Other Russia movement organized the protest, in defiance of a ban, to draw attention to Russia's economic troubles and to protest Kremlin plans

to extend the presidential term from four years to six. Critics say the constitutional change as part of a retreat from democracy and is aimed at strengthening the grip of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and his allies.

News broadcasts on the main television networks made no mention of the Moscow crackdown or of protests in St. Petersburg and Vladivostok.

Kasparov and other prominent liberals have just launched a new anti-Kremlin movement called Solidarity in a bid to unite Russia's liberal forces and encourage a popular revolution similar to those in Ukraine and Georgia.

Seeds of hope: Freezing vaults guard Earth's flora

ARDINGLY, England (AP)—The underground bunker can block nuclear fallout, withstand a direct hit by a jetliner, and is cooled to a deathly chill.

The ultramodern facility in the tranquil English country-

side looks like a perfect lab for a James Bond villain, but it doesn't hide anything sinister. The only thing kept here are seeds, lots of them—more than a billion, in fact.

Scientists say this is the

world's most diverse seed bank, but its keepers worry that the global financial crisis could cut its government and corporate funding and cause the seed gathering to wither at the end of next year, well short of its goal.

Organizers said about 300,000 Hamas supporters crowded into a dusty outdoor arena and spilled over into nearby streets. Many waved flags and sported baseball caps in the Islamic group's signature green color.

In the skit, Hamas paraded a Palestinian speaking Hebrew and dressed in an Israeli soldier's uniform—a reference to Israeli Sgt. Gilad Schalit, captured by Hamas-allied militants in June 2006.

"I miss my Mom and Dad," said the man playing the Israeli soldier, kneeling as he spoke. "Tell Olmert, why don't you take care of your soldier?"

The capture of Schalit in a June 2006 cross-border raid is an open wound in Israeli society. The taunt at the rally drew condemnation from Israel, which has been indirectly negotiating the soldier's release with Hamas for the past 2 1/2 years.

A spokesman for the Israeli government, Mark Regev, called the skit "another example of (Hamas) cruelty and inhumanity."

In comments aired Sunday, exiled Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal said a six-month truce with Israel would not be renewed after it expires this week.

Overdrive

Out of South Korea, Hyundai Genesis is cut-rate luxury



The 2009 Hyundai Genesis' styling is hyper-generic—with a collage of cues from BMW (tail lights), Mercedes (grille) and Lexus.

By DAN NEIL
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

The chocolate-brown leather is softer than a Hershey bar in a cop's back pocket. The top-stitched upholstery across the dash and doors seems sewn with a needle borrowed from Miuccia Prada. The interior wood accents are carved from the most majestic lumber in the old-growth faux forest.

If you didn't know better—and really, Hyundai would prefer you didn't know better—you'd think the South Korean company had been at this luxury-car business a long time. In fact, the Genesis is the company's first full-size, rear-drive luxury car, an audacious shot whistling across the sport-sedan bows of BMW, Mercedes, Audi and Lexus. And the Genesis—\$33,000 with the base 290-horsepower V-6; \$38,000 with the optional 375-hp V-8—undercuts whatever relevant competitor you care to name by a good \$10,000.

Cut-rate luxury is a complicated notion. It is true that when you buy a BMW or Mercedes-Benz, some incalculable percentage of the cost resides in the badge. But there is value in those names, and not just as a matter of getting good spots in valet parking.

Premium-brand cars keep more of their residual value and offer owners the satisfactions of heritage—Mercedes at Monza, BMW at Le Mans—and the sense of belonging to a great automaking tradition.

Hyundai—storied maker of cracker boxes such as the Excel and Accent—has no such poetry to fall

back on. But it does have an extraordinarily lean and efficient manufacturing process, cheap labor and great relationships with its suppliers. So it's possible for the company to offer this near-peer to Euro sport sedans at about a 20 percent discount. In these leaner times, many customers will forgive the Hyundai its relative lack of brand cachet.

To make that compromise easier to swallow, Hyundai has taken the extraordinary step of debadging its own car: There is no flying H on the big grille of the Genesis. This is a first, in my experience, and it's a move that subverts the grammar of luxury in ways I can scarcely wrap my head around. It's like taking a Rolex knockoff—a Romex, say—and scratching off the name. A real counterfeit, a fake genuine article? I'm dizzy.

Doubling down on its own perverse anonymity, the Genesis' styling is hyper-generic—a ransom-note collage of cues from BMW (tail lights), Mercedes (grille) and Lexus. Check out that Hofmeister kink in the C-pillar. Been to Munich lately, have we?

Still, there's no denying that, like Hyundai's Sonata and Azera, the Genesis is a staggering amount of car for the money. Our test vehicle was the 4.6-liter, V-8-powered model with the \$4,000 technology package (528-watt, 17-speaker sound system with XM radio; navigation system; adaptive front headlamps; heated and cooled driver's seat; and more).

In some ways, the Genesis delivers a deep-pile luxury that betters the badge-bearing competi-

NUTS & BOLTS

Base price: \$38,000
Price, as tested: \$42,000
Powertrain: 4.6-liter DOHC, 32-valve V-8, with dual intake runners and variable valve timing; six-speed automatic transmission; rear-wheel drive
Horsepower: 375 at 6,500 rpm
Torque: 333 foot-pounds at 3,500 rpm
Curb weight: 4,012 pounds
0-60 mph: 5.6 seconds
Wheelbase: 115.6 inches
Overall length: 195.9 inches
EPA fuel economy: 17 mpg city, 25 mpg highway
Final thoughts: A Mercedes with Seoul

(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times

tors. The cabin ambience is exceptionally quiet. The windshield and side windows are glazed with double-laminated acoustic glass; the unibody and body panels are crammed with sound-deadening panels and adhesives that all but mute the outside hurly-burly.

The creamiest and most luscious part of the car, though, is Hyundai's new 4.6-liter, all-alloy V-8, a lovely watch-work of reciprocation that hits all the right notes. Near-silent and under-taxed around town, the engine is capable of big torque and acceleration—zero to 60 mph is well below six seconds—and a bit of a feral growl. Let there be no doubt, this thing has a motor in it.

At 80 miles per hour, I slipped the six-speed ZF automatic transmission into third and kicked the slats. The car pulled like a rabid malamute up to its 6,850-rpm redline. Another shift, another redline, and without much ado I was exceeding the posted speed limit of most Autobahnen and traffic was reversing past me at an alarming clip.

Interestingly, the overhead-cam V-8—with dual-intake runners and variable timing on its 32 valves—will happily digest both regular and premium fuel, Hyundai says.

The company even offers horsepower figures for both fuels: 368 hp on regular and the nominal 375 hp on premium. Fuel economy is 17 miles per gallon city, 25 mpg highway, though I lead-footed my way to an 18-mpg average.

The Genesis has respectable undergirding: five-link suspension front and rear, with all the bits in cast alloy. The suspension tuning on the 4.6-liter model (by Sachs) is firm but compliant, though it lacks the silk-wrapped dreaminess of a comparable Lexus.

On a fairly vigorous flog up the secret canyon test road, the Genesis acquitted itself well enough, with good body control and well-damped transient behavior.

The steering has a nice heft to it but isn't particularly communicative. The car will hustle, but given the all-season radials' relative lack of bite and the car's significant weight, it doesn't seem to enjoy it.

Generally speaking, this car is much happier defying expectations in a straight line than confirming them in aggressive cornering.

I'm far too much of a romantic to buy this car. I like a brand with provenance and I'm willing to pay for it. For more hard-nosed, practical types, the Genesis 4.6 will present an all-but-irresistible case of value per dollar. And they won't be wrong.



The 2009 Genesis, Hyundai's first full-size, rear-drive premium car, is a near-peer to Euro sport sedans—but at a 20 percent discount.

Life & Style

As that old Kermit the Frog standard goes, it's not easy "Bein' Green," but the folks at DreamWorks have done their darndest to make sure we are entertained at "Shrek the Musical," the company's lavish stage adaptation of its hit animated movie.

For much of the time, they succeed, thanks to the talent and ingratiating appeal of the show's four principal performers, starting with Brian d'Arcy James as that disagreeable, smelly green ogre who lives in a swamp.

James, whose rotund Shrek resembles a chartreuse Ed Asner with tiny trumpet-like ears, has got one of those robust musical-theater voices that fills the theater. Even encased in what looks like a rubberized fat suit, his forceful personality comes through and drives the story.

If the show, which opened Sunday at the Broadway Theatre, sometimes settles for efficiency over inspiration, so be it. That's one of the pitfalls of closely identifying your product—and these days musicals aspire, above all, to brand-name profitability—with its original source material. You have to satisfy the fans of the film as well as theatergoers who may never have heard of the movie or the William Steig book on which it is based.

And no expense seems to have been spared in creating a unique, fairy-tale world in which Shrek sets out to rescue the Princess Fiona (a delightful Sutton Foster) so she can marry the evil Lord Farquaad (Christopher Sieber in a scene-stealing performance).

Shrek is accompanied on his meandering adventures by a wisecracking Donkey, portrayed with eyelash-batting impishness by Daniel Breaker. Their journey is told in a stop-and-go manner. David Lindsay-Abaire's book becomes a series of scenes that don't quite build into a satisfying whole despite director Jason Moore's yeoman efforts to keep things moving as fast as possible.

Yet taken one by one, these scenes offer some genuine theatricality and moments of inspired hilarity.

The appeal of "Shrek" always has been in its subversive treatment of fairy tales and their most famous

NEW YORK (AP)—Brian d'Arcy James makes for a very unlikely ogre. And no one was more surprised than the actor himself when he was cast as the famous green hero of "Shrek the Musical," which opened on Broadway Sunday.

The slim 5-feet-9-inches tall actor who comes to the door of his comfortable dressing room at the Broadway Theatre is far from Shrek-sized. He's friendly, thoughtful and almost soft-spoken, nearly the opposite of his stage persona.

The differences between James and his character make the actor's transformation into Shrek—the endearingly gruff star of the 2001 animated movie and its sequels—that much more dramatic.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think that this would come up in my radar," James says. "When my agent called, he said, 'They want to see you for Shrek.' And I said, 'Wow, OK, well what role?' And he said, 'For Shrek.' And I said, 'I know they're doing "Shrek the Musical." What part?'"

A mean green ogre named Shrek moves to Broadway



Brian d'Arcy James, left, who plays Shrek, and Sutton Foster, who plays Princess Fiona, take a bow during the opening night of "Shrek the Musical" in New York Sunday Dec. 14, 2008.

AP

Brian d'Arcy James is an unlikely ogre as Shrek

Brian d'Arcy James is not a household name like Mike Myers, who voiced the green ogre on screen, but his long theater resume has cemented his reputation as one of the most respected actors on the New York stage. His list of Broadway musical credits include a starring role in "The Apple Tree" opposite Kristin Chenoweth and a Tony-nominated performance in "Sweet Smell of Success."

Most recently, he won sterling reviews for his role as a hard-drinking Irishman in Conor McPherson's off-Broadway drama, "Port Authority."

Princess Fiona is played by Sutton Foster, who has a distinguished Broadway resume of her own, most recently starring as Inga in "Young Frankenstein." She counts herself among James' biggest fans.

"Every night, when he sings to me at the end of the show, I think, 'Brian D'Arcy James is singing to me!'" says Foster, who "squealed with delight"

when director Jason Moore told her that James was up for the role.

"I think that what makes this ogre so charming is that Brian has found this kind of delicate balance between this grouch, who doesn't want any friends, and this core that is tender and vulnerable," says the play's Donkey, Daniel Breaker, a recent star of "Passing Strange."

In fact, James said his role in "Port Authority," which was still in performances when he began rehearsals for "Shrek," gave him some insight into Shrek.

"That character was so beautifully lost and inept and a bull in a china shop," James says about his "Port Authority" role. He even wore a small fat pad for the part, in a taste of what awaited him in "Shrek."

The padded white suits that lend James Shrek's protruding gut, broad shoulders and stocky legs hangs in a corner of his dressing room. The 40-year-old shows off the pieces of

his costume with almost boyish enthusiasm—holding up Shrek's heavy pants, rustic tunic and tattered, ill-fitting vest.

There are Shrek's hands—two thick green gloves that look surprisingly life-like from the stage. Also, Shrek's giant boots, which house smaller boots that fit James' feet. The platform soles add extra inches to his height. James' face goes through an even more dramatic transfiguration. Three prosthetics are used to give him Shrek's bulbous nose and prominent chin before the green makeup is applied.

"So you can see that this—around my eyes and around my mouth—is really the only thing that's visible," he says. The prosthetics are attached to a cowl, which he describes as "basically a football helmet and shoulder pads situation with the face cut out."

The result is unrecognizable, except for his brown eyes and thick black eyebrows.

characters. A lot of them are present here—from Pinocchio to the Three Bears to Humpty Dumpty to Peter Pan and more. They want to escape their banishment to Shrek's swamp and, at the same time, earn a little respect for their individuality.

Villains often get the best lines in these stories, and the major meanie in "Shrek" is no exception.

Sieber's preening, height-challenged Lord Farquaad is played here as a distant relative of director Roger De Bris in "The Producers," and the actor makes the most of the nobleman's campy malevolence. Sieber is a sight, spending the show on his knees, his little faux-legs dangling in front of him. And the guy can really sing, too.

Foster's entrancing, high-spirited Fiona is a tomboy at heart, a young woman who has no problem leading a chorus of rats in a giddy tap number, one of the few times "Shrek" resorts to more traditional musical-comedy choreography.

The show's massive sets and colorful costumes (both courtesy of Tim Hatley) are so visually eye-catching that they often distract from what's going with the story and score. Composer Jeanine Tesori has written attractive, eclectic, pop-flavored melodies that range from a jaunty "Travel Song" to a gutsy duet called "I Got You Beat" for Shrek and Fiona that revels in rude noises. We wonder what that song will sound like on the original cast recording.

Lindsay-Abaire's lyrics are often fun and quite witty, which shouldn't be a surprise since he is the author of such zany, off-the-wall plays as "Fuddy Meers" and "Kimberly Akimbo."

Yet despite its celebration of snark (the production slyly tweaks other Broadway musicals), "Shrek" wants to honor heart as well. The show's ultimate message—it's what's inside that counts, not the outer wrapper—while not exactly new, is a fine one. And "Shrek" ends with a little sermonette of its own, sung by those outcast, eccentric fairy-tale creatures.

"Let your freak flag fly" goes one of the musical's more persistent lyrics. Maybe "Bein' Green" isn't so bad after all. (AP)

To prevent overheating, the show's costumers tuck ice packets into pockets of the athletic long underwear James wears under his padded suit. Even so, he is soaked with sweat by the end of each performance.

Turning into Shrek takes James about an hour and a half. Getting out of costume after each show takes between 30 and 40 minutes.

To avoid parroting Myers' performance in the animated trilogy, James hasn't watched the "Shrek" movies since he first auditioned for the role. At the same time, he says he feels a responsibility to be true to the audience's memories of the character.

The show's most passionate fans and toughest critics may be the children who were raised on the movies, including his own 7-year-old daughter, Grace, with his wife, actress Jennifer Prescott. Grace, who hasn't seen the show since its out-of-town tryouts in Seattle, is going to be in the audience on opening night.

"Hopefully we'll pass muster with her," James says.

By J. FREEDOM DU LAC
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BEVERLY HILLS, Calif.—Bounding out of a suite at the Four Seasons, she floods the hotel's 14th-floor hallway with radiance, red hair and Carole King lyrics.

"I feel the Earth. Move. Under my feet," she sings joyfully.

She shimmies, then makes jazz hands, as if life is but a musical.

Break into song for no apparent reason much?

"Yes!" Amy Adams chirps. "It's actually a pretty common occurrence to find me doing that." She giggles. "I'm getting over a cold, so I've got a gravel in my voice that I don't normally have. It's kind of fun to hear how your voice sounds, so I thought I'd sing a little."

Not that she needed an excuse. As a child in Castle Rock, Colo., she says, "everyone could be having a conversation, and I'd be off twirling in the corner, just singing and dancing in my own world."

In high school, she was "the dork who sang 'The Little Mermaid' in the hall." Eventually, the dork became the belle of Disney's ball, starring last year in the studio's big feature "Enchanted"—a role that called for Adams to break into song in Central Park. Nice work if you can get it: After beating out 300 other actresses at an audition, she found herself singing on the Academy Awards and hosting "Saturday Night Live" within a span of two weeks.

The Earth is still moving under her

adaptation of John Patrick Shanley's Pulitzer- and Tony-winning play. Set in 1964, it's about a cynical Catholic-school principal, Sister Aloysius (Meryl Streep), who is convinced that the charismatic priest, Father Flynn (Philip Seymour Hoffman), has sexually abused a student. Adams' character Sister James believes in the goodness of humanity but gets caught in the crossfire of Sister Aloysius' crusade against Father Flynn.

"Amy's inherently bright and cheerful, which makes her extremely right for the role," Shanley says. "Movie stars have a story that's larger than any story that they're in; it goes on. Amy's story is that she knows that the world is good, and the people around her don't, whether it's in 'Enchanted' or 'Junebug' or 'Doubt.' She brings that intelligent innocence to each of these parts and is able to gradually bring people into her worldview, through the power of her knowledge of goodness."

On "Doubt," Adams worked with acting greatness and lived to tell about it. Throwing herself between Streep and Hoffman, she easily could have been eaten alive by her own insecurities, which she said she "had to deal with" during a three-week rehearsal. In the film, she's a bright, powerful presence, with Streep calling her performance "masterful."

Streep worked with Adams again on "Julie & Julia," an upcoming movie about a young woman's quest to cook



As a child in Castle Rock, Colo., Amy Adams says, "everyone could be having a conversation, and I'd be off twirling in the corner, just singing and dancing in my own world."

Amy Adams enchants, impresses in nun's role

dainty little feet: On Thursday, Adams received a Golden Globe nomination for her supporting performance in "Doubt."

She's a late-arriving It Girl who last month, at the age of 34—after doing dinner theater for eight years, then scuffling for several years in Hollywood—found herself on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, looking all Rita Hayworth. The sexually charismatic come-hither look was an outlier, though, for the appeal of Amy Adams is about something much more innocent and pure.

If she is, in fact, America's beloved new sweetheart—and she seems to have ascended to the position while Jennifer Aniston was off brooding about Brad, and Julia Roberts was off being semi-retired on some New Mexico ranch—it's because Adams is probably the most incessantly and infectiously cheerful actress in the business. That, and she's beatific, like Ingrid Bergman, and has the endearing, goofy charm of Meg Ryan, both on- and off-screen.

She's a sunny delight, an open-hearted Good Girl who tends to play the part on-screen, whether it's Princess Giselle in "Enchanted," a ditzy, braces-wearing nurse in "Catch Me if You Can," a perky congressional aide in "Charlie Wilson's War," or an effervescent, pregnant chatterbox in the indie comedy "Junebug," a role for which Adams received an Oscar nomination. "I call them my lovely girls," she says.

Adams plays another lovely girl—a lovely nun, actually—in "Doubt," the

every recipe in Julia Child's "Mastering the Art of French Cooking." She adds: "I very was impressed. She's the real thing."

Adams is a wisp of a thing, with a dainty ballet-dancer's body. Her eyes are blue-green marbles, which really pop off the screen in the somewhat monochromatic "Doubt." She sort of looks like a doll; "Enchanted" director Kevin Lima once said he was struck by how much "she looks like a Disney character." Snow White with red hair, maybe—though she's not really a redhead. She dyed it for a role and never went back to blond.

"Everyone's always like: 'You're so typecast,'" Adams says, referring to her recent roles. "But actually, when I came out to L.A., I was always the bitchy girl." What changed? "My hair!"

Adams started playing bad girls immediately after arriving in Hollywood in 1999: Her first part was as a vicious vixen on "Manchester Prep," a canceled Fox series that wound up going direct-to-video as a movie, "Cruel Intentions 2."

For all of the effervescence that she projects publicly and professionally, though, Adams insists that she does have moments of private, personal gloom. She'd just rather keep them private, is all.

"Oh, gosh—I can be very dark," she says. "Of course I can. ... Light can't exist without dark. It just can't. But if my darkness comes out in public, peo-

ple are going to be so confused, like, 'Who's THIS girl?'"

Adams also keeps herself out of tabloid trouble. "I don't want the kids to see me like that," she says. "I take that very seriously. I don't even want parents to introduce me as Giselle when they recognize me and I'm having an ugly day. Like when I'm in the elevator in the hotel, coming up from the gym. 'Honey, look who it is!' I'm like: 'Oh, don't. Please don't. It's not gonna be nice. She's gonna stop believing in princesses.'"

The things you have to think about when you've Arrived.

Adams was an Army brat, born in Italy, raised mostly in Colorado, after a brief stop at Fort Belvoir, Va. She was the middle child among seven; her parents divorced when she was 11, leaving the Mormon church at the same time. Adams didn't have any particular aptitude for academics, but she loved to sing and dance, so she decided to try to make a career out of it, taking a job at a dinner theater in Boulder, Colo.

"It was better than working at the Gap," she says. Also better than Hooters, where Adams was employed just long enough to buy a used car: "I started performing, of course, out of a love for it, but also out of necessity."

For eight years, across three states, Adams worked in dinner theater, a world that she describes as tough, both for the competitive cattiness and the physical demands. "I had a lot of recurring injuries—bursitis in my knees,

pulled muscles in my groin, my adductor and abductor. My body was wearing out."

While working in Minnesota, Adams landed a role in the beauty-pageant sendup "Drop Dead Gorgeous," which was shooting locally. She became friendly with the actress Kirstie Alley, who persuaded Adams to move to Hollywood.

So she did, arriving in January 1999. She got small roles here ("Psycho Beach Party") and there ("That '70s Show")—and learned how to perform in front of a camera, which, she discovered, wasn't the same as stage acting.

"I had trouble being open when I first started acting on film," she says. "I felt extremely vulnerable. Maybe it was the nature of the work, the microscope that's on you on a set. I never went to a conservatory and didn't study anywhere; I went straight into doing musical theater and dinner theater, so I'd come up with what worked for me. But it didn't work for every situation, so I had to study with a coach who helped me get over myself, essentially, and not worry about feeling exposed."

The breakthrough appeared imminent six years ago, when Adams played Leonardo DiCaprio's fiancee in "Catch Me if You Can." But the bigger roles didn't come. Adams thought about giving up—or, at least, going to New York "to get back into musicals and put my dancing shoes back on." But "Junebug" wound up earning Adams her first Oscar nod in 2006, and then came "En-

chanted" and all that has followed.

Not that she's ready to revel in her success. The whole thing feels far too tenuous, she says. "I think I spent so much time kind of on the road to getting work that I don't know that I'll ever feel comfortable. Do you know what I mean? I guess I'll have to work on it, but the struggle is such a part of my being and part of my makeup that I can never be complacent and not work hard."

She says that when she hosted "Saturday Night Live" in March, she was "so super-focused on the task at hand, like a ninja," that the cast and crew seemed to worry that she wasn't enjoying herself. "They kept saying, 'Are you having fun?' I was like"—and here, she clenches her teeth—"Yes, a really. Good. Time." She laughs. "I've met several of them since then, and I said, 'I'm so glad we got to meet again. You know, I'm actually a lot of fun! I'm a hoot!'"

Oh, right. We heard something about that. It was the director Shanley who said that Adams had saved the "Doubt" wrap party. Following the somber and intense shoot, everybody got together at a karaoke bar in Queens, and it was not going well. "It was kind of dismal," Shanley says. "And then she grabbed that microphone and put on the Amy Adams show. She got my friend to sing 'You Don't Bring Me Flowers,' and they brought down the house. Amy really wants life to work, she wants community to work. She's a real people-pleaser. It's a lovely thing to see."

'Day the Earth Stood Still' launches to \$31M debut

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Audiences sat still for Keanu Reeves' sci-fi remake "The Day the Earth Stood Still," making it the weekend's top movie with a \$31 million debut, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The 20th Century Fox release also added \$39 million in 90 overseas markets for a worldwide total of \$70 million.

The movie updates the 1951 tale of an alien and his giant robot enforcer who come to Earth with a warning about the consequences of humanity's destructive nature.

"Audiences are moving to see 'The Day the Earth Stood Still.' It's a visually stunning movie with timely issues everybody on this planet can relate to," said Fox distribution executive Chris Aronson. "Basically, how we treat each

1. "The Day the Earth Stood Still," \$31 million.
2. "Four Christmases," \$13.3 million.
3. "Twilight," \$8 million.
4. "Bolt," \$7.5 million.
5. "Australia," \$4.3 million.
6. "Quantum of Solace," \$3.8 million.
7. "Nothing Like the Holidays," \$3.5 million.
8. "Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa," \$3.3 million.
9. "Milk," \$2.6 million
10. "Transporter 3," \$2.3 million.

other and how we treat this planet that we call home."

The Warner Bros. holiday romp "Four Christmases" slipped to second place with \$13.3 million. The Reese Witherspoon-Vince Vaughn comedy raised its three-week total to \$88 million.

Another seasonal tale, Overture Films' "Nothing Like the Holidays," opened a weak No. 7 with \$3.5 million. The movie

features John Leguizamo, Debra Messing and Alfred Molina in the story of a Chicago family's holiday reunion.

The overall box office plummeted compared with the same weekend last year, when "I Am Legend" opened with \$77.2 million and "Alvin and the Chipmunks" debuted with \$44.3 million. This weekend's top 12 movies took in \$83.3 million,



AP

In this image released by 20th Century Fox, Jennifer Connelly, left, Jaden Smith and Keanu Reeves, right, are shown in a scene from, "The Day the Earth Stood Still."

down 45 percent from a year ago.

"This was predestined to be a down weekend given the incredible one-two punch of 'I Am Legend' and 'Alvin,'" said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Media By Numbers. "There was no way this weekend could measure up."

A rush of films opened with big numbers in limited release to qualify for the Academy Awards.

Miramax's "Doubt" pulled in \$525,030 in 15 theaters, averaging \$35,002 a cinema, compared with \$8,708 in 3,560 locations for "The Day

the Earth Stood Still." The film stars Meryl Streep, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Amy Adams in a war-of-wills drama between an old-school nun and a progressive priest.

Clint Eastwood's "Gran Torino" played in six locations and took in \$284,000 to average \$47,333. The Warner Bros. film stars Eastwood as a bigot who becomes an unlikely protector for his immigrant neighbors against street thugs.

The Weinstein Co. drama "The Reader" rang up \$170,000 in eight theaters for a \$21,250

average. The Holocaust-themed story stars Kate Winslet as a former concentration camp guard standing trial years later.

Steven Soderbergh's two-part, four-hour-plus film biography "Che" took in \$60,100 in two cinemas to average \$30,050. The IFC Films release stars Benicio Del Toro as Latin American revolutionary Che Guevara.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

'Dark Knight,' 'Milk' make AFI film list

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Batman epic "The Dark Knight," the political biopic "Milk" and the gritty drama "The Wrestler" were among critical favorites that landed on the American Film Institute's list of the year's 10 best movies.

Also on AFI's list, released Sunday, were the animated "Wall-E," Clint Eastwood's "Gran Torino," the superhero blockbuster "Iron Man," the indie dramas "Frozen River" and "Wendy and Lucy," the adapted play "Frost/Nixon," and the Brad Pitt epic "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."

Unlike other film honors, the institute does not rank films or

ON THE NET

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pick one as the year's best. The filmmakers behind the top 10 choices will be honored at a luncheon Jan. 9.

Many of the films on the list picked up Golden Globe nominations last week and are expected to compete for Academy Awards. Oscar nominations are to be announced Jan. 22.

Among Globe best-drama nominees were "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," David Fincher's drama about a man who ages backward, starring Pitt and Cate Blanchett; and

Ron Howard's "Frost/Nixon," based on the Peter Morgan play about the famous TV interview of Richard Nixon by David Frost, starring Frank Langella and Michael Sheen.

The AFI also released a top 10 list of TV shows for 2008, featuring "Breaking Bad," "In Treatment," "John Adams," "Life," "Lost," "Mad Men," "The Office," "Recount," "The Shield" and "The Wire."

The top 10 lists were chosen by two 13-member panels, one each for movies and television. Members included writer Mark Harris, filmmaker Robert Towne, and critics Leonard Maltin, Elvis Mitchell and Richard Schickel.

WALL-E director celebrates a week of kudos

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Hollywood's most famous trash compactor continued his journey from the dump to the Oscars.

The robot star of "WALL-E" will roll the red carpet at the Golden Globes, now that the Disney/Pixar animated film secured nominations for animated feature and original song. That likely means rubbing elbows—are those technically elbows?—with this awards season's hottest celebs, including Brad Pitt, who'd do well to avoid a red-carpet throwdown with the little 'bot. "WALL-E" director Andrew Stanton joked Thursday.

"Well, you know, Brad would

look better after the fight," he said. "But WALL-E is pretty sturdy. He's lasted 700 years. So, there's longevity there."

The Globe nominations come just a day after "WALL-E" won the Los Angeles Film Critics Association biggest prize: best picture. That group is just one among many suggesting "WALL-E" deserves to break out of the animated block at the Academy Awards.

A best-picture Oscar isn't a notion Stanton, 43, is yet prepared to seriously consider.

"Who thinks that's going to happen in their life?" he said. "Who even thinks they're going to make a movie, no less

"than it'll end up in the category of just five select films?"

Nevertheless, Stanton seems

prepared for the awards-show

gauntlet for him and "WALL-E,"

thanks to the experience collecting

animated-feature Oscars for

"Finding Nemo."

"I just remember so many free meals," Stanton recalled. "And it's weird, because there starts to be a commonality of who's nominated, even though they vary at times. You start to see the same filmmakers and stars and artisans in the same room, just wearing different clothing and a different meal on your table. It's an odd existence for a month."

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The Day The Earth Stood Still

Synopsis

Aliens land on Earth with a message for all humans: live in peace or be destroyed.

Delgo

Synopsis

A fantasy epic about a teenager's struggle to unite two warring nations.



Punisher War Zone

My Only U

Friday 4:20 7:05 9:35
Saturday 1:05 4:20 7:05 9:35
Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:05
Mon thru Thurs 4:20 7:05

Vhong Navarro, Toni Gonzaga

Comedy, Romance • Rated PG 13



Four Christmases

Transporter 3

Friday 4:30 7:15 9:35
Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:35
Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15
Mon thru Thurs 4:30 7:15

Jason Statham, Robert Berleand

Action, Crime, Sequel • Rated PG 13



Twilight

Bolt

Friday 4:15 7:30 9:30
Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:30
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30
Mon thru Thurs 4:15 7:30

John Travolta, Miley Cyrus

Action, Animated • Rated PG

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'Survivor' respects its elders in season finale

NEW YORK (AP)—Bow-tied schoolteacher Bob Crowley beat "Survivor" rivals Sugar and Susie to emerge as Sole Survivor on Sunday's season finale.

At age 57 the oldest winner in "Survivor" history, Crowley will take his \$1 million prize back home to Portland, Maine. Bearded, wiry and professorial-looking, he teaches high school physics in nearby Gorham.

"My plan was to fly under the

radar as long as I could ... and be a nice guy, so that people would like me," Crowley summed up shortly after his name was announced by host Jeff Probst, on a post-game special aired live from Hollywood.

Runners-up were Susie Smith, the gabby 47-year-old hairdresser-homemaker from Charles City, Iowa, and 29-year-old Jessica "Sugar" Kiper, the blond pinup model from Brooklyn.

The winner was chosen by a seven-member jury of previously expelled contestants, to whom the three finalists appealed during their all-important last tribal council. In that voting, Bob edged out Susie, 4 votes to 3, with Sugar snagging no one's support.

"I had to lie - and that's part of the game - several times," Sugar acknowledged while pleading her case between giggles. "And I'm sorry."

Diaz: Don't count on seeing me in 'Shrek' musical

NEW YORK (AP)—Cameron Diaz says she's a big fan of "Shrek the Musical" but has no desire to star in it.

The actress, who voices Princess Fiona in the "Shrek" film franchise, raved about the musical adaptation of the animated blockbuster at its Broadway opening Sunday night.

Asked whether she'd consider portraying Fiona on stage, she said: "No. Absolutely not. What they do up there ... is, to me, impossible. It's wonderful, though. They've done such a great job. They worked really hard, and it really pays off."

Tony-winning actress Sutton Foster plays Fiona in "Shrek the Musical," which began preview performances last month at the Broadway Theatre. Actor Brian d'Arcy James portrays the titular smelly green ogre who lives in a swamp and falls for Fiona.

"It's hilarious," said Diaz, sporting a white Bill Blass dress, black Dior coat and bright red lips. "There's so many laughs. ... It's great to see all the actors playing it together, because when we do it for the animated



Actress Cameron Diaz arrives for the opening of "Shrek the Musical" in New York Sunday Dec. 14, 2008.

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Charlie Sheen's daughters unhurt in LA car crash

MALIBU, Calif. (AP)—A spokesman for Charlie Sheen says the actor's two young daughters were involved in a collision on a highway in Malibu but were not injured. Authorities say 4-year-old Sam and 3-year-old Lola were in a car driven by their nanny Friday. It was struck by a Honda Civic making a turn in front of them on the Pacific Coast Highway. The Honda driver was taken to a hospital, but the extent of her injuries was not released. Sheen's spokesman says the accident could have been worse, but the children were in car seats. Sheen shares custody of the girls with ex-wife Denise Richards. He also has an older daughter with a former girlfriend and is expecting a fourth child with current wife Brooke Mueller.

Back briefly, Amy Poehler bids 'SNL' viewers adios

NEW YORK (AP)—Amy Poehler is officially exiting "Saturday Night Live" this time. Less than two months after giving birth to son Archie, she made a surprise

return last week to the late-night comedy show where she has been a regular for eight seasons. Then, Saturday, she surprised viewers again by telling them goodbye. "This is my last show," Poehler announced from her "Weekend Update" anchor desk. "Being able to do over 140 shows with my friends and my family has been a dream come true." "I love you," she told the audience, "and I will miss all of you very much." Viewers won't have to miss her too long. Later this season, Poehler is expected back on NBC in her own weekly sitcom.

Joe Pantoliano opens up about depression

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)—Joe Pantoliano's first reaction to being told he was clinically depressed was ... euphoria. Finally, he said, he had an answer to why he'd been so miserable despite having the success and family he always wanted. The 57-year-old actor, perhaps best known for playing Ralph Cifaretto on HBO's "The Sopranos," was in Buffalo Thursday to talk about the organization he founded two years ago to help

remove the stigma attached to mental illness. It's called: No Kidding, Me Too! "Mental disease is the only thing you can be diagnosed with and get yelled at for having," he said. "Why is that?" Appearing with representatives from pharmaceutical and biomedical research companies, Pantoliano said medication has helped him manage his depression. "From the moment I was diagnosed there was a certain sense of euphoria and 'Thank God' we figured this out," he said, "because I thought that I'd become such a curmudgeon."

No-show Queen of Soul pipes up at benefit concert

NEW YORK (AP)—Organizers of a military benefit concert in New York say Aretha Franklin missed an award presentation but showed up for the main event hours later. The Queen of Soul was a no-show when she was to receive the Torch of Freedom Award on Sunday in Times Square. The award was given by the Soldiers', Sailors', Marines', Coast Guard and Airmen's Club. A spokesman for the concert organizers says Franklin went on as

Sent packing earlier in the finale were Kenny Hoang, a 22-year-old professional video gamer from Westminster, Calif., and Matty Whitmore, a 29-year-old personal trainer from Pacific Palisades, Calif.

This, the 17th edition of the CBS strategy-endurance game, was set in the West African nation of Gabon, where 18 castaways had come together when the season began.

(films), we never see each other. We don't work together."

Diaz reprises her voice role in the fourth "Shrek" film, slated for release in 2010. Mike Myers and Eddie Murphy will return as Shrek and Donkey, respectively.

Joining Diaz at Sunday's performance were America Ferrera, Joan Rivers, Rosie Perez, Kathie Lee Gifford, Hoda Kotb, Phylicia Rashad, and Ben Stiller and his wife, actress Christine Taylor.

"We are 'Shrek' fans at our house," Stiller said while Taylor posed for photographs on the red carpet. "And we're going to go check out the musical and let the kids know if it's suitable for children."

Rivers bantered with Gifford and Kotb, who co-host the fourth hour of NBC's "Today Show." When Gifford asked for Rivers' favorite "Shrek" character, Rivers responded: "Oh yeah, like I care! We're all grown-ups! I'm thrilled to be here."

Rivers, who had a cameo in 2004's "Shrek 2," cracked: "I'm part of the family. But I'm not hardly, like, excited to see 'Shrek' (onstage)."

scheduled later at the Nokia Theatre. She performed "New York, New York," a medley of military tunes and her classic "Respect." It's unclear why Franklin missed the earlier engagement. Her publicist didn't immediately return messages.

'Pulp Fiction' screenwriter pleads over car death

VENTURA, Calif. (AP)—An Oscar-winning screenwriter of "Pulp Fiction" has pleaded not guilty to vehicular manslaughter and driving under the influence of alcohol in a fatal January crash. Roger Avary of Ojai was arraigned Friday in a court in Ventura. Authorities say Avary's car hit a telephone pole in Ojai on Jan. 13. The crash injured his wife and killed passenger Andreas Zini, who was visiting from Italy. The 43-year-old Avary has apologized for the accident. His lawyer has said the writer was grief-stricken over the death.

Avary and director Quentin Tarantino won the 1995 Academy Award for writing the screenplay of "Pulp Fiction." Avary also co-wrote the screenplay for last year's "Beowulf."

Man's career is two-year detour on road to marriage

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating "Felix" for six years. He moved in with me a year ago. We decided to do it because it made sense economically, and also to find out if our lifestyles meshed. We now know that we are compatible, and I feel that I am living with the man I would like to marry soon.

My problem is although I have a stable, high-paying job and am ready for marriage and children, Felix is not. He has given me the distinct impression that he has no plans to marry me for at least two years—until he finds a higher-paying job and can support himself instead of depending on me.

I feel awkward not knowing when—or if—Felix will propose. I now realize that I acted too soon in encouraging us to live together. I don't know if I should just accept our living situation or ask him to move out until he's ready for marriage. How should I approach this without making him think I no longer love him?

TOO QUICK IN SAN JOSE

DEAR TOO QUICK: You and Felix need to have a loving—but frank—conversation. I respect the fact that he doesn't want to be married until he is in a stronger financial position. And I also respect the fact that you don't want to just live together indefinitely.

A lot can happen in two years. People's goals can change, they can meet others and their careers can separate them. It appears that you and Felix may suffer from a case of bad timing. It is important that both of you be free to grow in your own ways.

While this might seem sad, it does not mean that you do not care for each other, or that you won't wind up together. But for now, some separation would be the healthiest thing for both of you. If your relationship is meant to be, his moving out won't kill it.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Our neighbors are taking advantage of us. They go on five vacations a year and expect us to watch their cat and house—for no pay. This includes shoveling snow, watering plants and flowers, mowing their lawn, getting their mail and feeding their cat, along with litter box duty. They insist that "Princess" be checked on twice a day.

My husband and I work full-time and have three small children. We have told our neighbors how busy we are, but they still expect it of us. They don't even ask nicely. They'll say, "We're going to be gone for a week and will need you to take care of our place."

They're an older couple and generally good neighbors, but we feel that if they can afford to take all these trips, they can also afford to pay us. They do bring us trinkets from their travels, but we could really use the money. They have no children or other close neighbors.

What should we do? Please hurry because they have another trip coming up.

POOPED-OUT PET SITTERS

DEAR POOPED OUT: Start checking around to see what professional house and pet sitters are charging for their services in your area. Then have a frank chat with these neighbors and inform them what the going rate is, and that rather than trinkets you could use the money. If they're smart, they'll compensate you because you have already proven that you are honest and reliable as well as close by.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write *Dear Abby* at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)



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Steelers rally to beat Ravens 13-9, win AFC North



BALTIMORE (AP)—The Pittsburgh Steelers used a second straight fourth-quarter comeback to earn another AFC North title. Santonio Holmes caught a 4-yard touchdown pass from Ben Roethlisberger with 43 seconds left, and the Steelers clinched their second consecutive division crown by beating the Baltimore Ravens 13-9 Sunday.

The Steelers (11-3) trailed 9-6 before moving 92 yards in 13 plays to take their only lead and score the game's lone touchdown. Roethlisberger went 7-for-11 for 89 yards on the drive.

Last week, Pittsburgh used a 17-point fourth quarter to rally past Dallas 20-13. The Steelers have won five straight, and this was their first win in Baltimore since 2002. It also earned the Steelers a first-round bye.

Matt Stover kicked three field goals for the Ravens (9-5), who remain in the wild-card hunt despite being eliminated from the AFC North race.

The Steelers began their final drive at their 8 with 3:36 left. Two straight completions to Hines Ward moved the ball to the 34, and a third-and-10 completion to Nate Washington for 16 yards took Pittsburgh to midfield.

Washington caught a 24-yarder to the 14, and a 10-yard pass to Ward set up first-and-goal at the 4. After two incompletions, Roethlisberger scrambled left, then found Holmes over the middle for the winner.

The play was reviewed because it appeared Holmes' feet were in the end zone but the ball may have been in front of the goal line. The official explanation for a TD was that Holmes had both feet in the end zone with possession of the ball.

Page 776 of the rules digest in the NFL fact book reads: "A player with the ball in his possession scores a touchdown when the ball is on, above or over the goal line."

Down 9-3, the Steelers used a 30-yard pass from Roethlisberger to Ward to set up a 30-yard field goal by Jeff Reed with 9:26 to go.

Baltimore then moved to the Pittsburgh 27, but a third-down sack forced the Ravens to punt, setting up the dramatic conclusion.

Baltimore used an outstanding punt and a turnover to take the 9-3 third-quarter lead. After Sam Koch punted to the Pittsburgh 1, Holmes caught a pass but fumbled when hit by Samari Rolle. Ed Reed returned the ball to the 16, setting up a 28-yard field goal.

Later in the quarter, Holmes muffed a punt. Pittsburgh's Keyaron Fox took the loose ball 18 yards to the Baltimore 33, but on third-and-1, Roethlisberger fumbled when sacked by Terrell Suggs

and Brandon McKinney plucked the loose ball out of the air for the Ravens.

Tempers flared after the play, and Baltimore's Haloti Ngata received a 15-yard penalty for vigorously pulling a Pittsburgh player from the angry crowd.

A risky play by Ravens punt returner Jim Leonhard produced the game's first points. On the final play of the first quarter, Leonhard picked up a bouncing kick in a crowd at the Baltimore 11 and scooted 46 yards down the right sideline. Joe Flacco then completed a 24-yard pass to Todd Heap, and Stover followed with a field goal.

Pittsburgh answered with a 14-play drive that ended with a 31-yard field goal by Reed.

Baltimore then deftly mixed the pass and run in a beat-the-clock possession for a 26-yard field goal with 49 seconds left in the half.

Cowboys 20, Giants 8

At Irving, Texas, DeMarcus Ware added three sacks to his NFL-leading total and Dallas took down Eli Manning eight times on the way to a crucial victory over New York in a game where all eyes were otherwise on Tony Romo, Terrell Owens and Jason Witten.

The Giants (11-3) locked up the National Football Conference East title when Dallas lost last Sunday. New York has lost consecutive games for the first time since starting 0-2 last season, with both losses coming since star receiver Plaxico Burress shot himself and was lost for the season.

Colts 31, Lions 21

At Indianapolis, Despite a litany of missed tackles and two lost fumbles, Peyton Manning kept Indiana (10-4) on track for a playoff run, and kept the Detroit (0-14) on track for a winless year.

The Lions, seemingly on their way to the first 0-16 season in NFL history, were victimized in the fourth quarter by Manning and the Colts.

Texans 13, Titans 12

At Houston, Andre Johnson atoned for one of the worst games of his career in Houston's first meeting with Tennessee this season with a career-high 207 yards and a touchdown to lead the Texans to their fourth consecutive win.

Kris Brown kicked two field goals for Houston.

Panthers 30, Broncos 10

At Charlotte, North Carolina, the Panthers finished off a perfect regular season at home with a dominating performance to clinch at least a tie for the NFC South title and moving closer to their first playoff berth in three years.

Four days after it was announced Jer-



Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Santonio Holmes (10) is tackled by Baltimore Ravens cornerback Samari Rolle (22) during the second half of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008, in Baltimore.

ry Richardson needs a heart transplant, he checked out of the hospital and was in his familiar spot in his end zone suite, watching Steve Smith and DeAngelo Williams power Carolina (11-3).

Vikings 35, Cardinals 14

At Glendale, Arizona, Tarvaris Jackson got another shot at starting quarterback, and boy did he make the most of it. Playing in place of injured Gus Frerotte, Jackson threw for four touchdowns and the Vikings stayed alone atop the NFC North.

Adrian Peterson rushed for 165 yards on 28 carries, his franchise record ninth 100-yard game of the season for the Vikings (9-5), who won their fourth in a row. They can clinch the division title with another victory or loss by Chicago.

Cassel's sterling performance just six days after the death of his father, Greg, kept the Patriots (9-5) in a three-way tie for first place in the AFC East with Miami and the Jets. Cassel left the team briefly during the week to be with his family, but looked sharp Sunday.

Patriots 49, Raiders 26

At Oakland, California, Randy Moss caught two of Matt Cassel's career-high four touchdown passes in his first game against the Raiders since his trade to New England last season.

Atlanta twice turned it over near the Tampa Bay end zone and had a huge breakdown on special teams, allowing Tampa Bay to block a punt with less than 3 minutes left in regulation. That

Dolphins 14, 49ers 9

At Miami, the Dolphins had possession for less than 22 minutes but held the opposition without a touchdown for the third game in a row and helped its playoff chances.

The 49ers ran 79 plays to 42 for the Dolphins, but Miami tight ends scored the only touchdowns on first-half pass-

Sorenstam ends career with birdie at Dubai Ladies

on family and business interests, led the tournament after the second round, but shot a 75 on Saturday to torpedo her hopes for a third straight title at the season-ending tournament on the Ladies European Tour.

"I have had many farewells since I announced my decision some five months back, but this one was special," she said. "I started my career with LET, and it is fitting to end it with an LET event."

Sorenstam, who is retiring to focus

Monke shot a 68 to protect her overnight lead, finishing at 13-under 275. Veronica Zorzi of Italy was second, three strokes behind the German, with British veteran Laura Davies another shot back in third.

"I'm feeling very happy," Monke said, adding that it was tough to focus on her game and not Sorenstam. "Of course I heard the big applause when she was hitting her shot into the 18th green. I was on the 16th green at the time. And then

set up Matt Bryant's tying field goal with 48 seconds left.

Jets 31, Bills 27

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Abram Elam sacked J.P. Losman and Shaun Ellis picked up the fumble and rumbled 11 yards into the end zone with 1:54 left for the go-ahead score.

The Jets (9-5) will win the AFC East with victories in their final two games, against Seattle and Miami.

Bengals 20, Redskins 13

At Cincinnati, the Redskins lost for the fifth time in six games, unable to keep up with one of the NFL's lowest teams. Ryan Fitzpatrick ran for a touchdown and threw for another.

The main intrigue was how the Redskins (7-7) would react to injuries that decimated their offensive line and grumbling by running back Clinton Portis that rippled through the locker room. They held a players-only meeting at midweek after Portis derisively called coach Jim Zorn a "genius" for benching him the previous week.

Chargers 22, Chiefs 21

At Kansas City, Missouri, Philip Rivers rallied San Diego from a 21-3 third-quarter deficit, throwing two touch-down passes in the final 73 seconds.

The Chiefs (2-12), helped by a delay-of-game penalty against the Chargers, tried a 50-yard field goal on the final play, but Connor Barth's kick was wide left.

Rivers, who came in with an NFL-best 102.0 passer rating, was 34-for-48 for 346 yards with two touchdowns and one interception.

Jaguars 20, Packers 16

At Jacksonville, Florida, David Garrard threw two touch-down passes, Maurice Jones-Drew scored twice and the Jaguars snapped a four-game losing streak.

The Packers (5-9) lost on a late drive for the third consecutive week. Carolina beat Green Bay 35-31 two weeks ago with a 55-yard drive in the final two minutes. Houston kicked a winning field goal as time expired to win 24-21 last week.

Seahawks 23, Rams 20

At St. Louis, Olindo Mare's 27-yard field goal as time expired lifted the Seahawks, who broke a six-game slide. Seattle (3-11) tied the game on T.J. Duckett's 1-yard run with 2:47 to go.

The Rams (2-12) scored 17 points in the first half, more than in all but two entire games, while rolling up 243 yards. They reverted to their bumbling form the rest of the way while losing to an injury-ravaged team without Matt Hasselbeck and tackle Walter Jones.

we saw her actually finishing it off on 18. We hit our tee shots by that time and so I could at least see a little bit."

Sorenstam said she was a little nervous Sunday morning and came to the course a bit earlier to stretch and reflect on the day. But once she hit her first shot, she said it was "automatic."

"I know the time is right, and therefore I feel very happy," she said. "If you think about 15 years and all of the things I've achieved, it's sad. But you close one door and you open another one. I'm glad I have a chance to do that."

Bryant scores 26 to lead Lakers past Timberwolves



LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kobe Bryant had 26 points and five assists, and the Los Angeles Lakers pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat the struggling Minnesota Timberwolves 98-86 on Sunday night.

Pau Gasol had 18 points, 11 rebounds and six assists, Andrew Bynum added 14 points and nine rebounds, and Trevor Ariza scored 14 points for the Lakers.

The win was the 13th in the last 15 games for the Lakers, whose 20-3 record is the second-best in the NBA behind Boston's 22-2 mark, but it wasn't very impressive. The Lakers won despite being outrebounded 53-46. They forced 17 turnovers while committing 10 themselves and shot 44.7 percent to Minnesota's 36.1 percent.

Al Jefferson had 20 points and 13 rebounds to lead Minnesota. Craig Smith added 18 points and eight rebounds, and Ryan Gomes scored 13 for the Timberwolves (4-19), who lost their ninth straight game and fourth in a row since Kevin McHale took over as coach last Monday.

The Timberwolves trailed 76-70 before a basket by Ariza and four straight points by Bryant gave the Lakers a 12-point lead with 4 1/2 minutes remaining. Minnesota didn't threaten after that.

The Timberwolves have the NBA's second-worst record and are 2-10 on the road, but they led 57-54 with 6 1/2 minutes left in the third quarter after scoring eight straight points. But a 3-pointer by Bryant, a basket by Lamar Odom and five straight points by Luke Walton gave the Lakers a seven-point lead, and they were on top the rest of the way. It was 69-62 entering the final period.

Both teams shot 2-of-11 to begin the second quarter, explaining why they each scored five points in the first 6 minutes, leaving the Lakers ahead 25-23.

The Timberwolves scored the next five points before the Lakers went on a 17-9 run to finish the period for a 42-37 halftime lead despite being outrebounded 31-18. Minnesota committed 13 turnovers to six for Los Angeles in the opening 24 minutes.

The Lakers led by as many as seven points before settling for a 20-18 lead after one quarter of play.



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (24) puts up a shot as Minnesota Timberwolves forward Al Jefferson defends during the first half of their NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008 in Los Angeles.

Hornets 99, Raptors 91

At Toronto, David West scored 29 points and James Posey made six 3-pointers and had 20 points as New Orleans beat Toronto for its eighth win in 10 games.

Rasual Butler added 16 points, and Chris Paul had 12 points and 12 assists for the Hornets, 12-of-33 from 3-point range. Chris Bosh had 25 points for Toronto.

Spurs 109, Thunder 104

At San Antonio, Tony Parker scored 22 points, and Tim Duncan had 20 points and 12 rebounds in San Antonio's sixth straight victory.

Matt Bonner added 17 points, and Roger Mason had 14 for the Spurs. Jeff Green led the Thunder (2-23) with 33 points, and Kevin Durant had 28.

Grizzlies 102, Heat 86

At Memphis, Tennessee, O.J. Mayo scored 28 points, and Rudy Gay added 18 to help Memphis beat Miami for its fourth straight win, the Grizzlies' longest winning streak since the final five games of the 2005-06 season.

Michael Beasley led Miami with 20 points. Dwyane Wade had 17 on 5-of-16 shooting.

Rich get richer: Yankees add Burnett to Sabathia



**N E W
Y O R K
(A P)—**

Forty-two players lost their jobs, many let go by teams looking to cut costs.

No such money worries for the New York Yankees, who made another splashy addition to their starting rotation Friday by reaching a preliminary agreement on an \$82.5 million, five-year contract with A.J. Burnett.

Just two days after striking a \$161 million, seven-year deal with CC Sabathia, New York added Burnett to a rotation that also includes holdovers Chien-Ming Wang and Joba Chamberlain. The Yankees are hoping to re-sign Andy Pettitte and have looked at Ben Sheets as an alternative.

"I can sense the excitement and the confidence that's spreading around the entire organization about what we're getting done and what we may get done still," Yankees co-chairman Hank Steinbrenner said earlier Friday, before Burnett's decision became known. "A rising tide lifts all boats, and the confidence and the excitement right now among the team and the organization is contagious."

Burnett won 10 of his last 12 decisions and finished 18-10 with a 4.07 ERA for Toronto. He set career highs in wins, strikeouts (231) and innings (221 1-3).

The World Series champion Philadelphia Phillies added to their offense when they reached a preliminary agreement on a \$31.5 million, three-year deal with slugging outfielder Raul Ibanez.

Ibanez will receive a \$2 mil-

K-Rod: Mets are 'going to be the team to beat'

NEW YORK (AP)—Francisco Rodriguez has a message for the Philadelphia Phillies and the rest of the NL East. "Of course, we're going to try to win the division. Of course, we're going to be the front-runner. Of course, we're going to be the team to beat," he said Saturday.

Four days after agreeing to a \$37 million, three-year contract, K-Rod was confident the Mets will put consecutive September collapses behind and overtake the World Series champion Phillies in ruling the NL East.

"I don't want there to be a controversy or the other ball-clubs in that division to take it personally or take it in a bad way," he said. "If they ask me, 'Oh, which ballclub is going to win the National League East?' It's going to be the Mets. Easy question."

In 2007 and 2008, the Mets treated their fans much the same way Lucy dealt with Charlie Brown trying to kick a football: They promised ev-

erything would be different this time only to yank the ball away at the end. September leads evaporated, and they were eliminated on the last day of the regular season.

On Thursday, Phillies ace Cole Hamels took a shot at the Mets.

"For the past two years they've been choke artists," he said on WFAN radio.

Philadelphia's Jimmy Rollins began the verbal sparring before the 2007 when he said the Phillies were the team to beat in the division—even though the Mets came within one win of reaching the World Series the previous year.

"Everybody knows what happened, unfortunately. They didn't get the job done. Unfortunately, you know, it happens," Rodriguez said Saturday from Venezuela during a conference call. "We cannot be living with the past. We've just have to get that behind us and get focused."

They made an eight-year offer to first baseman Mark Teixeira during winter meetings in Las Vegas, team spokesman Tim Mead said Friday. Boston, Washington and Baltimore all have expressed interest in the 28-year-old Maryland native, who also met with the Yankees.

Several well-known players were among those let go by teams in the hours before the midnight deadline to offer 2009

In a span of four days, the Mets reached a \$37 million, three-year deal with K-Rod, acquired J.J. Putz from Seattle and exiled three of the guilty, trading Aaron Heilman, Joe Smith and Scott Schoeneweis. The Mets want to forget a season in which they blew 29 of 72 save chances.

Rodriguez saved a major league record 62 games for the Los Angeles Angels last season and says he's ready for a changed atmosphere at Citi Field. He was animated with the Angels, and is looking forward to the energy of the Mets' fans. He wants to earn their respect.

"New York's atmosphere is totally different. The fans are really passionate," he said. "A lot of players like to be on that stage. I'm the kind of guy that likes to be on the big stage."

He's not used to charged-up fans at home.

"In Anaheim, they're more calm," he said. "They're really relaxed when they're watching

the game."

Already a three-time All-Star, Rodriguez turns 27 next month. He claimed his drop in velocity last season was caused by his development of a changeup. He tried to throw all his pitches at the same arm speed.

K-Rod thinks his velocity will be back up next year.

"People, they're looking at velocity and not worried about what I've done," he said. "To me it's not a concern. It's not something that I really worry about right now."

He joins fellow Venezuelan Johan Santana on the Mets, and can sense the excitement when "walking the street, going to the mall, doing groceries."

At a dinner with the Mets last Sunday night, he spoke with Santana, who had called team executive Tony Bernazard.

"They told me all the best things of New York and some of the bad things, too," he said. "Like I say, he gave me a little advice."

Clay Hensley and Milwaukee left-hander Chris Capuano.

"Economics forced us to make this decision," Astros general manager Ed Wade said of Wigginton. "If there is an opportunity for us to adjust our payroll later in the offseason, we'd like to see if there's an opportunity to bring him back."

Three lower-level free agents finalized contracts, with Cincinnati acquiring left-hander Ar-

thur Rhodes (\$4 million for two years), Arizona getting infielder Felipe Lopez (\$3.5 million for one year) and Pittsburgh picking up infielder Ramon Vazquez (\$4 million for two years).

The Chicago White Sox finalized an international deal, agreeing to a \$10 million, four-year contract with Cuban infielder Dayan Viciedo.

And in the day's one trade, the New York Mets dealt left-hander Scott Schoeneweis to the Arizona Diamondbacks for minor league right-hander Connor Robertson. New York agreed to pay \$1.6 million to Arizona to cover part of the \$3.6 million salary for Schoeneweis, who went 0-3 with a blown save and a 5.40 ERA in September as the Mets collapsed down the stretch for the second straight year.

Ten players eligible for arbitration agreed to contracts, including Washington outfielder Willie Harris, who got a \$3 million, two-year deal.

The Chicago Cubs agreed to one-year contracts with outfielder Reed Johnson (\$3 million), right-hander Chad Gaudin (\$2 million) and left-hander Neal Cotts (\$1.1 million), and the Phillies reached one-year agreements with infielder Eric Bruntlett (\$800,000) and right-hander Clay Condrey (\$650,000).

Also agreeing to one-year contracts were Kansas City infielder Esteban German (\$1.2 million), Detroit infielder Ramon Santiago (\$825,000), White Sox outfielder DeWayne Wise (\$550,000) and Oakland catcher Rob Bowen (\$535,000).

Schools invited to Christmas caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
rosely_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

 The Division of Youth Services, Mayor's Office, and Division of Sports and Recreation are inviting schools to participate in the 2008 Annual Christmas Basketball Jam Festival at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The tournament will run from Dec. 27 to Jan. 3 and will have competitions in the girls and boys' 14-and-under and 18-and-under age groups.

"In an effort to promote healthy lifestyles and keeping youths occupied during the holiday break, we are encouraging all schools and clubs to participate in this tournament," event coordinator Elias Rangamar said.

Interested teams are asked to submit registration and waiver and rosters forms on or before Dec. 18. Late entries may be accepted if slots are available. Entrance fee is \$30 per team.

Coaches are also requested to attend a meeting this Thursday at 4pm at the conference room of the Ada Gym.

"We will make the tournament enjoyable for all youngsters, teams, parents, and fans. An awards banquet will be held immediately after the championship matches. Our goals for this tournament is to provide good competition and promote sportsmanship and camaraderie among participants," Rangamar said.

For more information, contact Rangamar at 664-2502 or via email at eli_rang@yahoo.com or doris_rang@yahoo.com.

Last year's Christmas caging had the G-Stars beating the Sonics in the exciting finals, 62-60.

Joseph Jung scored the winning basket of the G-Stars in



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The G-Stars' Joseph Jung pulls up for a shot during this year's Rotary caging. The G-Stars were the champions in last season's holiday caging with Jung making the game-winning basket in the finals against the Sonics.

the closing seconds of the championship match.

In the battle for third place, the San Antonio Sixers pulled off a 92-85 win over the visiting Team Tinian.

pointed the match ended so abruptly.

"I didn't expect the fight to end that quick. I thought he was ready and stuff and I wanted it to be a good fight because I've been training my hardest. I don't know... I wanted to go stand-and-bang but he was trying to get on the ground but I already got my jujitsu [training] on the ground too," he said.

Moments later, Quinata waved the white flag of surrender by indicating to Camacho that he had enough and was quitting.

The whole venue exploded as Fatial leapt up from the mat and raised his two arms in triumph, while Quinata gloriously retreated to his corner.

While elated with the outcome of the fight that raised his mixed martial arts record to 15 wins, two draws, and five losses, Fatial said he was kind of dis-

pointed the match ended so abruptly.

Asked if he would give him one, Fatial said he would only accede to one if Quinata trains harder the next time.

"I'll give him the rematch. Everybody that asks me to a rematch, I give them. But they have to train hard because I always train hard," he said.

The loss was the first in four matches for Quinata, who boasted a 67-0 win-

loss record outside the ring.

In the semi main event, Fatial's stablemate Myron "The Natural" San Nicolas improved to 7-1 after beating "Brutal" Bryson Sablan of Predators.

San Nicolas engaged Sablan in a fierce ground fight with the former using his superior grappling skills to get the upperhand majority of the match.

San Nicolas mounted Sablan then unleashed a flurry of punches—mostly on Sablan's head—that forced the hand of Camacho to put a stop to the fight in the 1:51 mark of the first round.

The loss dropped Sablan's MMA record to 3-2.

The rest of the matches, including the historic first female MMA fight between Tara "Tarantula" Sambile and Jen "Salbahe" Sambile, will be published in the following days.

gles with a 6-0, 6-0 thrashing of Australia's Johannah Lamond-Halle.

In the quarterfinals, Minor was paired with New Zealand's Claire Gourley and the former won, 6-0, 6-1, to set a semis duel with the No. 2 seed Shannon.

Minor lost to Shannon twice this year before the New Zealand tournament. The Fiji netter beat Minor in Fiji and in New Caledonia.

The CNMI netter got her revenge against Shannon winning their semis tiff in three closely fought sets, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4.

Thea's mother, Joy, was happy her daughter pulled it off against Shannon.

"She is one of Thea's toughest opponents in Fiji and in New Caledonia. They've met several times in the past three years with Shannon enjoying a 4-2 record against Thea before the tournament in Poverty Bay," Joy said.

"We're very pleased with Thea's performance in the two tournaments."

The younger Minor had two Final Four appearance and two championships in her belt so far and is looking to add more, as she is also entered in the girls' 16 singles and doubles divisions.

In other results, Thea's teammates—Christian Miller and Rafael Jones—dropped their debuts in Poverty Bay.

Jones bowed to Australia's Jake Noonan, 9-4, while Miller bowed to New Zealand and No. 3 seed Jacob Carey, 9-0.

Jones redeemed himself in the consolation draw winning three matches to reach the third round.

After their stint in Poverty Bay, the CNMI netters will conclude their New Zealand trip with a tournament in Auckland.

RBIs with two and eight, respectively.

Bego Camacho tallied a 2.97 ERA to lead five other pitchers. She pitched 33 innings in five games, gave up 53 runs, allowed 15 hits and had 14 errors.

NMC teammates Felisa Brel and Polly Omechelang placed second with identical ERA of 4.53, followed by DCCA's Eula Matsumoto (5.30), CHC's Meng Yamada (9.43), and CUC's Dolorina Panuelo (4.97).

Panuelo recorded the most strikeouts after five games with 14.

FITAL

From Page 28

Quinata and proceeded to mount him and pounded him some more, exacerbating the condition of the Guam fighter's now crimson face, as blood now proceeded to trickle down from his brow.

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MINOR

From Page 28

ed first in the 11-team field tournament. The duo drew a bye in the first round and moved into the semifinals after beating New Zealand's Naea Albert and Darian Taylor in the quarterfinals, 6-3, 6-0.

Minor and Kamoe advanced to the title match after shutting out Waikato's Rebecca Barnard and Claire Gourley, 6-0, 6-0.

The CNMI junior netter made her second finals appearance in the Poverty Bay tournament advancing to the title match in the girls' 14 singles.

Minor's foe was Kamoe, who out-classed the CNMI bet, 6-2, 6-2.

Minor was seeded fourth in the event and started her bid in the girls' 14 sin-

gles with a 6-0, 6-0 thrashing of Australia's Johannah Lamond-Halle.

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WOMEN'S

From Page 28

Teigita (.563), CHC's Mercelyn Santos and Sheena Sablan (.545), CHC's Shirley Ada (.538), NMC's Kuki Pangilinan (.526), Finance's Lilian Pangilinan (.500), NMC's Pauline Camacho (.500), and CUC's Roquita Norita (.500).

Batting leaders were based on 10 or more times at-bat.

Bert Camacho had recorded the most runs after five games with her 13, Jenny Palacios had the most doubles with two, Kani had the most triples with two, and Ngirbedul posted the most homers and

RBI's with two and eight, respectively.

Bego Camacho tallied a 2.97 ERA to lead five other pitchers. She pitched 33 innings in five games, gave up 53 runs, allowed 15 hits and had 14 errors.

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Panuelo recorded the most strikeouts after five games with 14.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	22	2	.917	—
New Jersey	11	11	.500	10
New York	11	12	.478	10 1/2
Toronto	10	13	.435	11 1/2
Philadelphia	10	14	.417	12

Southeast Division

Orlando	18	6	.750	—
Atlanta	14	9	.609	3 1/2
Miami	12	11	.522	5 1/2
Charlotte	7	17	.292	11
Washington	4	17	.190	12 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	15	8	.652	—
New Orleans	13	7	.650	1/2
Houston	15	9	.625	1/2
Dallas	13	9	.591	1 1/2
Memphis	9	15	.375	6 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	16	7	.696	—
Portland	15	10	.600	2
Utah	15	10	.600	2
Minnesota	4	19	.174	12
Oklahoma City	2	23	.080	15

Pacific Division

Central Division

East

South

West

National Conference

North

South

West

National Conference

North

South

West

National Conference

North

2008 PILCOWA-San Miguel Beer Basketball League

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Finals MVP Sonny Ranola of PILCOWA champion Diamond Auto Care.



Regular season MVP Bonbon Cadagat.



The Mythical Five in the 2008 PILCOWA-San Miguel Beer Basketball League pose with officials and volunteers of the inaugural caging during the awards ceremony at the CIC Centre Basketball Court in Garapan. The selection was composed of Jericho Cruz, represented by NRG teammate Mel Capalad (32), Century's Larry Palero, MIGS' Kae Bernardo and Bonbon Cadagat and Diamond's Elmer Esdrelon.



The top performers in various categories: Best in blocks Badong Camacho, third left; Jun Estolas (assists/represented by John Artates), Wowie Abuel (steals), third right, and Kae Bernardo (rebounds), second right. Joining them are officials and referees of the league.



Jojo Garon holding the Sportsmanship Award given to his team—San Miguel Light.



Best Coach Boy Garcia of Diamond Auto Care.



Members and coaches of runner-up MIGS pose with their trophy.



MIGS' Banjo Basila, right, drives against Diamond's Junar Guiab.



Diamond's Junar Guiab goes for a layup against MIGS' White Capalad during their title game.



Third placer Century Insurance Company.



Fourth placer C&R Distributor/NRG.



Bryant scores 26 to lead Lakers past Timberwolves

Kobe Bryant had 26 points and five assists, and the Los Angeles Lakers pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat the struggling Minnesota Timberwolves 98-86 on Sunday night. **25**

Saipan Tribune

Sports

Steelers rally to beat Ravens 13-9, win AFC North

The Pittsburgh Steelers used a second straight fourth-quarter comeback to earn another AFC North title. **24**



28 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2008

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Fitial beats Quinata in 'The Annihilation'

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

First of a three-part series

Kelvin "The Big Hit" Fitial capped Friday's Trench Warz IX: The Annihilation with a first round beat down of Reuben "The Booben" Quinata in the main event.

In front of a jam-packed crowd inside Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall, the Marianas Elite heavyweight hammered the Spike 22 Fight Academy fighter into submission, forcing him to tap out a mere 4:25 seconds gone in the fight.

Quinata, a PXC Preba Hao champ in Guam, was repeatedly hit in the head

TRENCH TECH

by Fitial's stinging jabs as the Saipan fighter's reach proved effective against the smaller but heftier Quinata.

By the first minute of the match, Fitial had already succeeded in opening a cut above Quinata's right eye and the latter tried to negate his opponent's reach advantage—and at the same time prevent further damage to his eye—by taking the fight to the ground.

While Quinata wasn't entirely suc-



MARK RABAGO

Celebrity referee Frank "The Crank" Camacho raises the right hand of Kelvin "The Big Hit" Fitial after declaring him the winner of his main event bout against Reuben "The Booben" Quinata in Friday night's Trench Warz IX: The Annihilation at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort. Inset, Myron "The Natural" San Nicolas mounts "Brutal" Bryson Sablan in their semi main event.



See FITIAL on Page 26

Minor gains second title in New Zealand

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
rosely_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



CNMI bet Thea Minor added another doubles crown to her collection after teaming up with Fiji's Tarani Kamoe in winning the girls' 14 doubles crown in the Poverty Bay East Coast Ray White Junior Championship Sunday in Childers Road, Gisborne, New Zealand.

Minor, who with Kamoe topped the same age group competition in the 2008 Coca-Cola Waikato Junior Open, claimed her second doubles crown after she and the Fijian netter downed New Zealand's Raven Albert and ITF Pacific Oceania teammate Annie Shannon in the finals, 6-2, 6-0.

The Minor-Kamoe tandem was seeded

See MINOR on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Thea Minor is seen here in a file photo during one of the tournaments on Saipan. Minor is in New Zealand and has won two doubles titles.

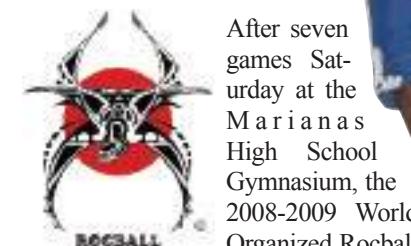


An Okies player prepares to return the ball during their game against the Soul Rebels in the 2008-2009 World Organized Rockball Community League at the Marianas High School Gymnasium. The two teams met anew Saturday with Okies prevailing, 61-60.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Naturals ousted, couple more teams on the brink

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
rosely_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



After seven games Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium, the 2008-2009 World Organized Rockball Community League is down to eight teams and two more are facing an early Christmas vacation.

Ghasias Brothers pushed the Naturals to the exit door via a 76-48 overtime win. The Naturals dropped their

See NATURALS on Page 26

Women's league has same batting, pitching leaders

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
rosely_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Bert Camacho



Bego Camacho

Bert and Bego Camacho strengthened their hold on the No. 1 spot in the batting and pitching race after five game games in the women's division of the Budweiser 2008 Inter-Government/Business Softball League.

Bert Camacho, of defending



See WOMEN'S on Page 26